

PERSIAN POETRY OF
MIRZA GHALIB

TRANSLATED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
SHAFI SHAUQ



In *Persian Poetry of Mirza Ghalib*, Prof. Shauq confronts the most challenging verses selected from a huge collection comprising over 10000 two – line verses. Being conversant with the canons of the poetic aesthetic of the West and the East, Prof. Shauq has been guided by the universal standards of poetry rather than his predilection in his selection.

Persian Poetry of Mirza Ghalib is definitely a selection truly representative of Ghalib and at the same time its most faithful English version. Keeping loyalty to poetic image, concept, textual constructs and organic unity of a two-line verse - form as the guiding principle in translation, and meticulously avoiding the verses admired for verbal music, cliched message, and threadbare platitudes, the present translation is an attempt to make Ghalib's Persian poetry accessible to readers whose taste is grounded in English poetry. The book at the same time makes the original text available to the fervent admirers of Ghalib.

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SHAFI SHAUQ

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2000

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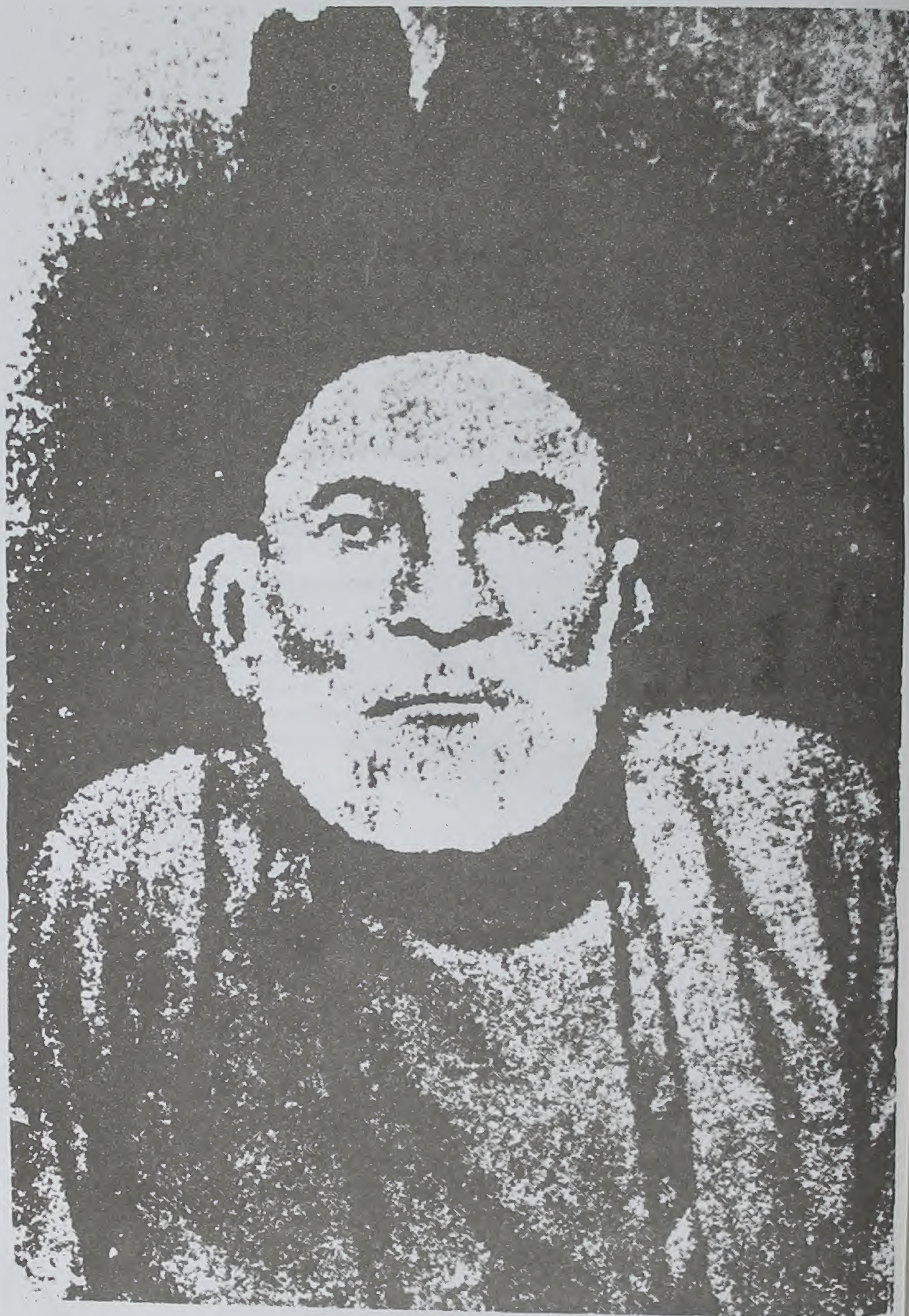
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FOREWORD

In my school days, I was made to believe that Ghalib's Persian poetry was beyond the comprehension of a lay reader as it needed specialisation, and in-depth education in classical literature, and , above all maturity of mind. Specialisation and in-depth education I failed to attain, but really it was in my mature years that the mystique of Ghalib's Persian poetry began fascinating as well as engaging me. I found, what once my kind school teacher told me it was a "treasure". In order to make my hazy understanding more or less reliably clear to myself, I dealt with it with my pen, for pen alone gives shape to amorphous understanding . And then one day it occurred to me, as the ways of mind often tend to be ostentatious, that I should publish what I did with Ghalib in my picked up English.

Perhaps I could not think of this venture had I not had the opportunity of going through some English renderings of Ghalib's Persian poetry. Dr. Yousuf Hussain's *Persian Ghazals of Ghalib* (1980) and Sayyid Fayaz Mohmood's *Ghalib: A Critical Introduction* (1993) are certainly commendable for making some of Ghalib's Persian poetry accessible to the English reading public. But both translations have certain limitations which hamper the readers' enjoyment and appreciation. Yousuf Hussain has avoided all those couplets which are rather difficult to translate. He has selected 1126 couplets out of 225 *ghazals* so there is hardly any *ghazal* in the book that would look like a full *ghazal*; custom demands that a *ghazal* should comprise no less than five couplets. While remaining particular about poetic words like *thee*, *thou*, *thine*, Dr. Yousuf has many a time considerably deviated from the original. Sayyid Fayaz Mohmood on the other hand has produced interpretation rather than translation of the selected verses, and interpretations generally defeat a reader's individual effort to reach to the beauty of meaning and form.

While remaining fastidiously faithful to the context, phrase, allusion and image, my attempt has been to help readers acquaint themselves with the oriental aesthetic of the *ghazal* and the *mathnavi* rather than to display my ability to produce equivalents of the features of oriental poetry from the repertoire of English poetry. The most important characteristic of the *ghazal* is, of course, the organic unity and independence of each of the component two-line stanzas, called *shēr*, while they retain allegiance with other couplets of the *ghazal* only in terms of rhyme and metre. I have tried to maintain the autonomy of each hemistich in the two line stanzas; rhyme and rhythm cannot be transferred and as such the beauty of music is lost. Since in Ghalib's poetry the rhythm of ideas dominates the phonic rhythm, loss of music does not make its translation impossible.

The classicism of the *ghazal* necessitates too many of threadbare emotions, expressions, allusions and similes; Ghalib could not escape this constraint, his ingenuity and originality notwithstanding. Care has been taken to avoid all those verses which depend upon the hackneyed eroto-mystic clichés of the Indo-Iranian poetry.

This prefatory note will have its purpose only when I gratefully acknowledge the helpful and critical interest of my learned friend Prof. Mohammad Amin of the University of Kashmir who painstakingly read through my translations and, using his proficiency in Persian and English, gave me valuable suggestion. Mr. Fahim helped me a great deal in preparing the computer-set script of the book for which I am grateful to him. Mr. and Mrs. Javeed Ahmad of Universal Computers deserve my special thanks for preparing the final laser print MS of the book.

And finally I would like to thank my wife FERROZA, whose prompting and loving support has enabled me to complete and produce the book.

January 3, 2000

SHAFI SHAUQ

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Ghalib: *Man in the World*

Ghalib is universally respected as one of the greatest oriental poets in the Indo-Iranian tradition of poetry. He enjoyed unparalleled respect and popularity in his life time and after his death. Great singers like KL Sahgal, Talat Mahmood, Begum Akhtar, Mallika Pukhraj, Farida Khanum and Jagjit Singh have discovered inexhaustible potential of melisma in his poetry. Ghalib was further apotheosized by film-makers especially Gulzar. The poet underwent metempsychosis in the person of Nasir-ud-Din Shah. His life has also been depicted through several theatre repertories and amateur performers. The result of this tremendous popularity is that we have a deified image of Ghalib, sometimes histrionic and bohemian. A dispassionate review of some major events of his life is, therefore, much called for. The life of an individual is never a chronological outline of major events of his/her life; it is the unrecorded and trivial events which make our days and nights.

Ghalib's poetry, as that of any other great poet, represents a highly individualised version of truth expressed through a very personal use of language, rather than being a programmed narrative of truth comprising verifiable facts. Because of the ineluctability of Ghalib's biographical facts, his milieu, and his private aesthetic of poetry, an analysis of the demythified person of the poet, and that too after penetrating through the ages, is not an easy task.

Ghalib was born on the 25th of December, 1799 at Agra. His father, Mirza Abdullah Baig (son of Mirza Quoqam Baig) was, according to Ghalib's own statement a remote descendent of the Saljuk rulers. With due respect to Ghalib's vanity in pedigree, it is known for certain that Ghalib's father served in the military of the Nawab of Oudh, in the first phase, the Nizam of Hyderabad, in the second phase, and the Raja of Alwar in the third phase. His mother Izzat-un-Nisa, was the daughter of a Kashmiri, Khwaja Ghulam Hussain Khan who lived at a mohalla in Agra called Kashmiran ka Kada, a locality of Kashmiri settlers there.

Perhaps it was due to his maternal lineage that Ghalib had love and admiration for Kashmir.

Ghalib's father died when he was only a child and he was brought up with affection and care by his maternal kindred. Named Asadullah, he was placed under the tutelage of Mirza Mu'azzam Ali, and then that of Abdus Samad Hormzud. Despite his carefree boyhood, he acquired profound knowledge of Persian language and literature, religion, mysticism, rhetoric, prosody, history and legend. He was so conscious of his consummate acquaintance with Persian that he accepted it as his mother tongue. The abundance of erudition in his poetry reveals that he must have been a voracious reader.

It was in his tender teens that he was married into a Nawab family which brought him sufficient money to sustain his profligacy. His father-in-law, Ahmad Bakhsh Khan, a horse-trader by profession, worked under the Rajah of Alwar as the commander of the Alwar regiment. He helped the British commander Major General Fazer in his fatal fight and this won him an estate in Gurgaon, and titles, *Rustumi jung* and *Dilāwar-ul-Mulk*. He also received favours from the Rajah of Alwar, and thus settled in Delhi, he lived a true Nawab's life. Ghalib, too, a few years after his marriage, left Agra in 1814 and settled with his wife Umrao Begum in Delhi at his in-laws' place. Delhi he found congenial for continuing his leisurely *nawābish* habits like extra-marital amours, gambling, drinking, kite-flying and pigeon-fancying. It was a place, too, where he participated with fervour in various poetry-symposia, and colloquies that were supported by royal patronage. Delhi, in spite of its fading glory, was a city replete with oriental romance and was surrounded by an aura of respectable luxury. The street Bili Maran (where Ghalib's small house is still a mute spectator of the times) was in the vicinity of Chandni Chowk, a typical oriental bazaar, throbbing with life in all its shades.

Being influenced profoundly by rich Persian literature, Ghalib started composing verse in his early boyhood. After a brief period of imitation, he gradually evolved his own style that was faithful to the classical way of writing with several hundred years' continuity in Persian. He also wrote in highly Persianised Urdu with abundance of allusions and conceits. He later on gradually abandoned his 'difficult' style, and started writing 'easy' verse, devoid mostly of allusions and ambiguity, that had a unidirectional lyrical import.

Ghalib's pride in family and his profligacy notwithstanding, his personal life was full of misfortunes and deprivations. Seven children

were born to him, but due to the high rate of infantile mortality during that period, none survived. He adopted a boy named Aarif, but he too died in his prime. For sixteen years he fought an official wrangle for the continuation of his family pension on the basis of his father's and uncle's military service, but failed. He remained oppressed with debts but could not surrender his feigned aristocracy. Being through and through a non-conformist in ritual and romantic in temperament, he had to contend with a nagging wife on trivial issues, although they respected and loved each other. In his poetry and prose-letters, he many a time complained of the harshness of life and poignantly longed for death.

Ghalib had ardent love for oriental tradition of *potes'* parleys, called *bazm-ārai*, and took part in all major and minor gatherings where the poets, masticating spiced betel leaves, appreciated one another with noisy *wah-wah*, *āfrin-āfrin*, *marhabā-marhabā*, quarrelled with each other in their competition for official recognition and competed in living an ostentatiously *happy-go-lucky* life. Ghalib tried to continue the tradition of the genres like the *ghazal* and the *mathnavi* as established by the masters of antiquity, but at the same time attempted to establish a style of his own with distinct Ghalibian characteristics. He did not crave for general popularity and admiration, and as such had a long poetic wrangling with Zauq, his senior contemporary in Urdu, who had established himself as the poet laureate at the time Ghalib settled in Delhi. In 1850, Ghalib, too, won the title *Najam-ud-Daulat Dabīrul Mulk* (the Star of Power, the Writer of the Land) and several favours from Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal emperor and a poet of fine sensibility. It was only to compete with Zauq that he abandoned his allusive and oblique expression and also started writing in the language of the commonage, called *Rēkhta* or Urdu or Hindustani. Although he could not achieve as good acclaim for his writing in Urdu as Zauq and others achieved, he was confident that he belonged to some future age; he possessed an unflinching aplomb to continue writing in his highly individualized style.

His despondence for not enjoying popularity, expressed in several verses and letters notwithstanding, he was recognised as the most outstanding poet by his contemporary literary connoisseurs. Hundreds of his disciples prided themselves on having Ghalib as their master in poetry; some of them helped him when he was in financial hardship.

In his struggle for survival and for gaining eminence, Ghalib depended entirely upon his scholarship and prowess in panegyri- zing men

in power. But often met with discomfiture. In his legal battle for getting pension from the British Company, he could not defeat his opponent, Nawab Shams-ud Din Khan (elder son of Nawab Ahmad Bakhsh Khan) who was affluent enough to send gifts to the persons who mattered. In 1827, Ghalib left for Calcutta to submit his petition to the Governor General. His panegyrics to the Company officers worked to the extent that his petition was placed before the Council of the Governor General, but the case was referred back to Delhi and ultimately the Governor General decided the case against Ghalib's petition. The decision left Ghalib in a state of depression as he was already submerged in debts.

At Calcutta he met a number of people and participated in some symposia. In one of the symposia, he was involved in an unwanted controversy about the literary worth of the poetry of a Calcutta-based Persian poet, Qatil. Ghalib did not like to create enemies; he wrote a long apology in Persian in the form of a *mathnavi*, *bādi mukhālif* (the Unfriendly Wind).

His case for pension prolonged for sixteen years, that is upto 1844, and this issue became almost past bearing. He possessed much more indolence and impetuosity than is thought necessary for a poet, and therefore could not undertake any responsibility of work. He declined to work as the Head Persian Teacher at the Delhi College (established by the Company in 1825), a respectable position offered to him by James Thompson, Secretary to the Government of India; the annoyance caused was that the Secretary did not come out of his office to receive him, as he alighted from his palanquin.

Gambling was one of his incorrigible habits which many a time led him into trouble. His house was the rendezvous for all the ne'er-do-wells of Chandni Chowk, and with the tacit help of certain friends in the police, he entertained the wastrels and earned very little for his daily bouts. But the vicious circle ultimately ended in his arrest and six-months' rigorous imprisonment with a two-hundred rupees fine. All his kindred and friends severed relations with him; only one of his friends, namely, Nawab Mustafa Khan Shafat, continued to see him almost daily during his captivity. Throughout his life, Ghalib remained indebted to his friends, and admirers found throughout India for their support for his incautious profligacy, but at the same time, he harboured a bitter sense of guilt which he expressed in many of his confessional verses and letters. In his *mathnavi Abri Guharbār*, he acknowledges many of his flaws but took pleasure in describing the waywardness of human behaviour and the vacuity of the traditional values of reward and retribution.

On the day when all the dead will crowd in,
 the souls will be again grafted in onto their bodies.
 They shall present their imperial pearls
 and exhibit their pompous character.
 Forgive me, O God, then for my hapless condition,
 my emptyhandedness and indigence.
 Do not increase my distress by assessment,
 assess only the heaviness of my suffering.
 I did not kill anybody on the sly,
 nor did I loot anyone by highway robbery.
 But wine, for which I will be consigned to falmes,
 gave vigour to a crawling thing like me.
 Whenever I was in distress, wine alone elevated me,
 what else could I do, O Cherisher of slaves?
 If you want to charge anybody with lust, and sensuality,
 summon the legendary Jamshid, Bahram and Parvez.
 I have not had a pleasure-house or any wine-cellar.
 I enjoyed neither any songstress nor any paramour.
 Whenever I remember my deprivations in life,
 I know I cannot be happy in your paradise.
 In that sacred but silent tavern,
 there will be no scope for the hubbub of drinking,
 where shall I find the wild abandon of the rainy clouds?
 I there would be no autumn, what is the fun of spring?
 I may be provided with a hourie, what use,
 if there is no anguish of parting and desire for union.
 What pleasure can an unknown beauty give?
 What delight is there in union without wait?
 How can she know how to demur at the moment of a kiss?
 How can she deceive one by false promises?
 She will always be yielding to orders, and trying
 to give us delight without a desire for delight.
 Where can we have these random oglings and longing for love?
 Where can we find a rent in the walls of paradise?

In his state of desperation, the only avenue left open for him was to write eulogies, tributes and salutations on various occasions in the day-to-day-life of the royal family and in the Fort activities. Being conscious of the absurdity of ostentation and vainglory, Ghalib must have suffered

from a tormenting sense of guilt in using his art in fanning the ego of the men of rank. It is unbelievable to envision the man who said

No more than children's play is the world before me,
a spectacle that is going on day and night.

could be a sly in using his mastery in words to eke out his little income from narcissistic lords and rulers. Yet his encomia are not devoid of poetic beauty, some of them are as sublime as his ghazals.

In spite of his continuous efforts, and even manoeuvring, he could not replace his contemporary Sheikh Ibrahim Zauq in the court. In 1850, he was appointed as the Court Historian by Bahadur Shah Zafar who admired Ghalib's poetry. The King's son, Mirza Fakhru was placed under the tutelage of Ghalib, and this considerably mitigated his financial anxieties. With the death of Zauq in 1854, Bahadur Shah himself became a disciple of Ghalib.

Among his friends, there were several English men like Macpherson, Edwards (a photographer who took Ghalib's photographs), James Thompson, Captain Heatherly (a dabbler in Urdu poetry under the pen-name Aazaad) and others who had a penchant for the oriental. During his brief sojourn at Calcutta, Ghalib developed intimacy with several orientalist like Andrews Sterling, for whom Ghalib wrote a panegyric to win his assistance in connection with his litigation. After his visit to Calcutta, his admiration for the West increased. He, like his first biographer and great reformer Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, vehemently supported the Western values of justice and modernity, and Westerners' quest for knowledge. He was, more than any other poet of India, deeply rooted in the several millennia old tradition of poetic aesthetic, legend and attitude to reality, yet he was acutely conscious of the limitations of orientalism and regression of human possibilities caused by the predominance of emotion over reason. Ghalib presaged the age of reason in the subcontinent; *Mughani Naamaa* (To Muse) is an unequivocal declaration of this credo. Ghalib, therefore did not show any sign of morbid xenophobia, but, on the contrary, praised the Europeans for their ways of life, their respect for higher values of life and, to the dismay of patriots, their values of justice. Addressed to Syed Ahmad Khan, the protagonist of modernisation among Indian Muslims, he wrote:

Look at the gentlemen from England,
and mark their modes and manners.
Discern how they have framed their legislation,

a legislation that was never known to us before.
 Their artisans have attained such proficiency in their arts
 as has made them excel all our predecessors.
 their nation alone has the prerogative to possess legislation,
 no other people are able to rule their country better than they.
 They have combined justice and wisdom,
 they have given Hindustan a hundred types of laws.
 Fire that we used to make by rubbing stones,
 is made by these skilful people by rubbing straws.
 What magic they have worked on the surface of water
 steamships they drive on the surface of water!

Like Syed Ahmad Khan, Ghalib did not envision culture as an immutable state of a community, but a process towards better conditions of life and human grace. He, notwithstanding his sentimental association with the past of the race and the community, welcomed the scientific temper and daring advancements in learning that shook the time-honoured notions of cosmology, man's condition in the world and life and death.

He found himself in a very difficult situation when after the Mutiny of 1857 the tyranny of imperialism was revealed in its naked form. The English used their might to curb the rising freedom struggle by casting away all forms of decency and veneers of sophistication and resorted to unscrupulous carnage. They did not spare even the royal family: after a bloody fight for more than four months, they vanquished Delhi and killed all the sons of the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar and exiled him to Rangoon as a prisoner. Ghalib witnessed the whole catastrophe with horror, finding all his ideals of culture, universal brotherhood and essential goodness of man shattered. As a helpless spectator, residing in Balli Maran street, he could do nothing but mourn in poetry and prose, finding language inadequate to give vent to his grief:

Every horseman of England
 is busy in destruction.
 On going out to the bazaar
 blood changes into poison.
 The city-square is a slaughter-site,
 every house has turned into a prison.
 Every particle of Delhi's dust
 is thirsty of Muslims' blood.

Nobody can move from there to here,
 nor can anybody move from here to there.
 agreed, we somehow meet each other,
 only to wail over body and soul.
 We may go outdoors, but only to complain
 of the pain of the hidden blisters.
 Or we may partake in lamentations,
 over the spectacles of devastation.
 How can a meeting of this kind
 efface the scars of separation.

Ghalib was not selective in his reaction to the spate of carnage, loot and destruction; he was equally grieved when some innocent English was killed. He wrote to one of his friends, 'Major John Jacob was killed in his prime. He is one of the thousands I am mourning'. (Letter to Mirza Hatim Ali Beg.) The incident of 1857 might have given him a tormenting sense of guilt for having written eulogies for the English lords. In the preface to his collected works in Persian he wrote, 'It feels nice to have been able to write passionate verses like those about trifling lovers, but at the same time I regret my greed which made me like a worldly wise man write many pages in panegyrising the men of rank.' (*Kulyāti Ghālib fārsi*, 1872 p.8.) In spite of his flattering the English rulers, he remained a suspect in old Delhi and was watched and even interrogated.

His personal deprivations and the agonizing political events of his time inculcated in him a deep-rooted longing for death which he expressed in some of his profound verses, and letters to his friends. Mingled with his characteristic sense of humour, his death-wish does not speak of any morbid depression, but the tragic sense of an alienated individual of an extraordinary creative genius.

In his late sixties, he became arthritic and lost his hearing and sight. The ailing decrepit poet was regularly visited by his friends and he continued exchanging letters with them. On February 15, 1869, he died in coma after a paralytic stroke. His ailing wife, who died a year later, was among the hundreds of mourners.

Ghalib's Persian Poetry: *Freedom Within Confines*

Ghalib wrote over 10424 two-line verses, each called a *sh'er*, in Persian. His Persian works, mainly written between 1835 and 1845, include 4176 verses of *ghazals*, 3658 of *qasīdas*, 2043 of *mathnavīs* and 420 of *rubāis*. In order to identify and appreciate the best of his literary output in Persian, a rigorous selection of it is needed. Every great prolific writer with a distinct style of his own repeats himself, and, with the change in literary canons and sensibility, much of the literary bulk grows obsolete and gratuitous; Ghalib could not be any exception.

Never losing sight of his career as a poet of the court, Ghalib knew that showing his prowess in the masterly use of the language of the court and in writing panegyrics for the men of rank would win him laurels and scholarships, and so he wrote very enthusiastically in the *lingua franca* of his time, and always with a natural felicity and ease as if Persian were his own tongue. He often congratulated himself for that, and many a time in a vituperous tone. Comparing his poetry in Urdu with that contained in his Persian divan (first published in 1845 under the title *Maikhana Arzu*) he expressed his self-esteem for his proficiency in Persian:

*pārsi bīn tā badāni kāndari aklīmi khayāl
māni-o-Arzhangam-o-ān nuskhāi artangi man ast.*

*ki darakhshand jawhari āyina ta bāqīast zang
saiqli āyina am in jawahar ān zang ast.*

[See my Persian so that you know it is a mine in the clime of
thought,

I am the Mane and the Arzhang of my time, my book is my
Artung.

The essence of a mirror has its lustre so long as its rust is intact,
I am the lustre of the mirror, this the essence and that the rust.]

Again in the same epistle to Zauq, he unequivocally declares his Urdu *divān* (first published in 1841) as useless as it was, according to him, unrepresentative of his genius. (Poets' critical estimate is often infatuated.) Since then, a selection of critics, especially those who have no smattering of Persian, endorse Ghalib's exaggerated opinion and then use all manner of hyperbole in commenting upon his Persian poetry.

Seen without overzealousness, Ghalib's Persian poetry is, unlike his Urdu poetry, a continuation of seven hundred years' old tradition of Persian poetry that flourished in the Central Asia and India, rather than a departure from it. The classicistic custom of following old models of poetry that mainly thrived in the courts, could hardly have any scope of innovation and individual experimentation. Adhering to the time-honoured eroto-mystic style of the medieval ages, it operated through refrain words (*radīf*) and conceit, and expressed what was thought to be the best thought in the world. Ghalib could not totally escape the constraints of the legacy, and therefore, his poetry, too, is additive rather than subordinative and, works through ruminating on the memorable thoughts that descended to him through oriental myths, fairy tales, legends and proverbs. However, with the birth of printing culture in northern India, Ghalib was among the first Indian poets to realize the limitations of mnemonic repertoire having continuity through oral tradition and, as a conscious man of wide erudition, tried to liberate his imagination from the established patterns and programmed themes. But the limitations of the genres and, of course, various extra-literary concerns like finding a niche in the court, occasional ostentatious display of his proficiency in handling the non-native court language, could not leave him altogether free. His subject-self existing in a particular locus of time could not sever all ties with the tradition and express the burden of his ontological experience. The bulk of his Persian poetry, therefore, remains aggregative, copious and agnostically toned.

Notwithstanding these limitations, there are hundreds of hemistiches scattered throughout his Persian *divān* that, despite their conformity with tradition, represent the greatest of Ghalib and, without any exaggeration, represent the apogee of the Indo-Iranian poetic aesthetic. A fastidious selection has to leave out all those verses which rely on trite expressions deifying feminine beauty (to the extent of bathos) customary wailings for the estranged Love (often married to the poet's rival) panegyring the men of rank, and various shibbolethic hymns to *aqua vitae* and statements about the transience of this world. Such hackneyed verses are nothing but wanton engagement of the poet in the

craft under the overwhelming line-end repetitive refrain-word, called *radīf*. The real Ghalib can be identified only through a selection that is in keeping with the poet's own 'theory of poetry' amply expostulated in many of his verses.

Ghalib believed that poetry was a harmonious blend of music and dream and it had no point-object in view to define or to explore. He was a visionary and, as such, had no well-defined ethical or aesthetic framework to dwell in. To him, the whole quest for beauty was poet's unquenchable quest for truth in which every point of time was simultaneously an end as well as a step towards eternity.

pā basta 'i nawardi khayāli chu wā rasi
har ālami zi alami dīgar fasāna īst.

har zarah dar tariqi wafai tu manzili
har qatraḥ az muḥīti khayālat karāna 'i.

[Once foot-bound you are in the maze of fancy, you shall know,
every world is a prologue to yet another world.

Every speck in the way of love is a destination,
every drop in the ocean of your thought is a shore.]

Ghalib held his contemporaries flabbergasted by his consummate and inimitable style and profundity of thought both in articulating what he believed to be communicable and what he wished to keep wrapped up in silence. Taking frequent recourse to legend and allusion, he sought an adequate vehicle for his non-conformist thought, while being persistently conscious of the inadequacies of verbal medium:

khwēsh rā sūrat parastān har ziruswā kardahand
jalwa mi nāmand-u dar mānī niqābi bēsh nēst.

[The adorers of forms vainly got themselves defamed,
what they call visible is in essence a veil.]

A nihilistic belief in vacuity beneath everything, transient as well as permanent, is the most immediate purport of Ghalib's Persian poetry; yet he drives our imagination to comprehend the incorporeal truth hidden in the constructs of material existence. However, in the process of

producing the wished transparence in sequences of significations, Ghalib is painfully conscious of the impossibility of the endeavour as language, unlike plastic media, has its own animus which resists all arbitrary arraying.

dūd saudā'i tataq bast āsman nāmīdamash
dīda bar khwābi parīshān zad jahān nāmīdamash,

dil zabān rā rāzdāni āshnā'īha na khwāst,
gah bihmān guftamash gāhi fulān nāmīdash.

[Smoke weaves a dark curtain, I call it the sky,
 eyes have a dissonant dream, I name it the world.]

The heart does not want the tongue to be its confidant
 now I call it the unknown, then I call it the known.]

In his creative effort to convey his personal meanings, mental states and indeterminate imaginative inscapes in the form of conceivable thinginess, Ghalib compels language to come out of the clichéd patterns descended from the antiquity. Even in his apocalyptic rumination, his lucific imagination succeeds in transferring the transcendent into the forms of colour and size.

zī waz'-i rauzani dīvār mitavān dānast
ki chashmi gamkadar mā barāhi sailābast.

[By the manner there is a rent in the wall, you should know,
 it is the eye of the gloom-house in wait of the coming deluge.]

Ghalib's metaphysical poetry, although difficult, is not ostentatiously syncretistic, but an outcome of his own individual way of going beyond all material existence to discover the phenomena of his own creation in the 'sphere' of non-being. Ghalib consciously maintained his reticence about the significance of projecting being into non-being; what mattered to him was the consciousness of the inexorable drift of all being toward non-being which our phantasmagoria may name for its own convenience. Ghalib, however, would not call this drift a march of being-toward-the-end, but an intense awareness of

being-here-with-a-purpose, an opportunity available to each one of us only once — a Khayamian proposal, indeed.

*biyā ki qā'idai āsman bigardānēm
qazā ba gardish-i ratle girān bigardānēm*

*zī chashmu dil ba tamāsha tamattu andōzēm
zī jānū dil bamaḍāra ziyān bigardānēm.*

[Come let us change the order of the skies
and change the destiny by circulating the heavy cup.

With our eyes and heart, we shall enjoy the spectacle,
with our souls and heart we shall turn it to our advantage.]

The tone of expressing this kind of hedonistic response does not suggest wallowing in lust but liberation from the fear of the moment and of the fictitious future, so that an individual achieves a generative anxiety, the essence of existence. Without any jargon of philosophy, Ghalib, recognising affectivity as the sole characterising feature of man in the world, always sings of the depths of anxiety that is the individual's ownmost, non-relational and ineluctable feature. The paths that are neatly well-defined, used and pronouncedly aiming at certitude, are not acceptable to him, he opts for those avenues that are labyrinthine, perilous and unknown.

Ghalib's metaphysics, therefore, unlike the doctrinal ones, which take contemplation as a luxury, is the outcome of his individual agony without any antecedent. His feeling soul is the centre of all the concentric circles of meanings and concepts: all the expanding gyrating flights of fancy start from that centre and narrowingly end there. The studious distance maintained from self, conceived as a spectacle of amorphous and convulsive processes, is the mainspring of the grotesque humour which underlies Ghalib's poetry. Freedom to him is a synchronised detachment and concern:

*chōn aksi pul ba sail ba zauqē balā hiraqs
jā rā nigah dar wa ham az khud judā hiraqs.*

*dar ishq imbisat hapāyan namī rasad
chōn gard bād khāk shav-o dar havā hiraqs.*

*az sōkhtan alam zi shugufan tarab majōy
behūdah dar kināri samūmo sabā biraqs.*

[As the shadow of a bridge on torrents dances in love for disaster,
have your eyes fixed at a point and dance distanced from yourself.

Ecstasy in love by travelling on foot, is not achieved,
be dust and like a whirlwind dance in gales of air.

No pain in burning, no pleasure in blooming,
aimlessly dance at the shore with the simoom as well as the zephyr.]

The force of such poetry largely depends on a special responsibility placed upon the addressee, although the textual 'you' is the covert 'I' of a heightened consciousness; the two, the addressee and the addressed, share the same state of freedom from the confines of the routine and the ritualistic.

Freedom to Ghalib is the culmination of the sublimity of soul which defies verbal expression, yet in the poet's dimensional imagination, we have:

*āzādgiast sāzi, amā sadā na dārad,
az har chi dar guzashtan, avāzipa na dārad,*

[Freedom is such music, as has no sound,
whichever path we tread, there is no sound of feet.]

The apparent silence is, however, a result of the unceasing embattlement and turbulence going on in the inmost seeking ever-new expressions:

*ay zauqi navā sanji bāzam ba kharōsh āvar
ghavghāie shabkhūni bar bungai hōsh āvar.*

[O passion for melody, bring me back my ecstasy:
produce the commotion of nightly assault in the house of my consciousness.]

In Ghalib's personal 'manifesto' of freedom, freedom is the simultaneity of the recognition of the state of boundlessness and of containment:

*ghurbatam nāsāzgār āmad vatan fahmīdamash
kard tangī halqai dām āshiyān nāmīdamash.*

[When adverse exile overtakes me, I assume it as my homeland,
and the tangle tightens, I call it my nest.]

Today's reader has to combat the obstacle of engrossing lyricism in Ghalib's Persian poetry to know and understand the non-conformist poet enveloped by the arbitrary conventions of the genres of *ghazal*, *mathnavi*, and *rubāi*. And in doing so, the reader has also to liberate himself from the arbitrary convention of literary appreciation.



ای مخلا و ملاخوی تو هنگامه ز
با همه در گفتگو، بی همه با ماجرا

شاهد حسن ترا، در روش دلبری
طره پر خم صفات موی میان ماسوا

دیده و ران را کند دید تو بینش فزون
از نگه تیز روگشته نگه تو تیا

آب نه بخشی بزور خون سکندر بدر
جان نه پذیری بکج نقد خضر ناروا

بزم ترا شمع و گل خستگی بو تراب
ساز تیرا زیرو نم واقعه کر بلا

نخبیان ترا قافله بے آب و نان
نعمیان ترا مائده بے اشتها

گرمی نبض کسی کز تو بدل داشت سوز
سوخته در مغز خاک ریشه دارو گیا



In solitude or in strife, You are rapt in stirring tumults,
conferring with your own self, when without company.

In the ways of love, you manifest your splendour
in complexities of attributes: the hair-thin waist of immanence.

The vision of the visionaries is whetted by your radiance,
like that of lightnings: the kohl in their eyes.

Vain is the strength of Alexander in getting elixir,
vain is the longevity of Khizr¹ when you do not like the offering.

The bleeding wounds of Ali are candles and flowers in your court,
the incident of Karbala is the bass and treble of your music.

The ill-fated form the caravan of the famishing wayfarers,
the favoured gourmets get dainties without a wish for food.

The heat of the pulse of those who are aflame with your love,
kindles the dry straws that are embedded in the clay matrix.

¹. Prophet Khizr who drank of the water of life and became immortal.



مصرف زہر ستم دادہ بیا و تو ام
سبز بود جائے من در دہن اژدہا

کم مشمر گریہ ام زان کہ بعلم ازل
بودہ درین جوئے آب گردش ہفت آسیا

سادہ ز علم و عمل مہر تو ورزیدہ ایم
مستی' ما پایدار بادۂ ما ناشتا

خلد بہ غالب سپار زانکہ بدان روضہ در
نیک بود عندلیب خاصہ نو آیین نوا

Pining for you, I am habituated to the venom of torment:
a verdant spot I enjoy even in the dragon's mouth.

Do not ignore my tears shed in the knowledge of eternity,
there in the gushes lies the movement of the seven skies.

Devoid of piety and enlightenment, I am replete with your love,
my inebriation is enduring for wine is my breakfast.

Allot your paradise to Ghalib, for he shall be in the garden,
a lovely song-bird for ever, warbling ever-new melodies.



درگرد غربت آینه دار خودیم ما
یعنی ز یکسان دیار خودیم ما

دیگر ز ساز یخودی ما صدا مجوی
آوازی از گستن تار خودیم ما

از بسکه خاطر هوس گل عزیز بود
خون گشته ایم و باگ و بهار خودیم ما

مشت غبار ماست پراگنده سو بسو
یارب بدهر درچه شمار خودیم ما

درکار ماست ناله و مادره‌وای او
پروانه چراغ مزار خودیم ما

خاک وجود ماست خون جگر خمیر
رنگینی قماش غبار خودیم ما

هر کس خبر ز حوصله خویش میدهد
بد مستی حریف و خمار خودیم ما

تار نگاه پیر و ما سلک گوهرست
رفتار پای آبله دار خودیم ما

غالب چو شخص و عکس در آینه خیال
باخویشتن یکی و دو چار خودیم ما



I am my own mirror holder in the dust of my exile,
or I am forlorn in my own native land.

Expect no sound out of the music of my ecstasy,
for I am but the sound of the breaking of my own string.

In the strife to satiate the desire for the dear rose,
the blood, I shed, has made a blooming garden for me.

A handful of dust strewn in all directions,
O Lord, how the meaning of my being shall be assessed?

Wailing is expected of me, but being filled with the gales of desire,
I am the moth of the lamp lit at my tomb.

The earth of my being is mixed with the blood of my liver,
I am the embellishment of the garment for my own elements.

Everybody on this earth is aware of his intentions,
I alone am rapt in my ecstasy and frenzy.

The thread of watchful eyes is the thread of pearls,
I am the pace of my own blistered feet.

I Ghalib, like the person and his reflection in the mirror of thought,
am merged together as well as in conflict with my own self.



ساز و قدح و نغمه و صبا همه آتش
یا بی ز سمندر ره بزم طربم را

از لذت بیداد تو فارغ نتوان زیست
در یاب عیار گلشن بے سببم را

ساقی به نمی کز قدح باده چکانی
بر خلد بخند آن لب کوثر طلبم را

بر نیا بم بر رولنه های طبع خویشتن
موج آب گوهر من کرده طوفانی مرا

خویش را چوں موج گوهر گرچه گرد آورده ام
دل پر است از ذوق انداز پر افشانی مرا

تشنه لب بر ساحل دریا ز غیرت جان دهم
گر بموج افتد گمان چنین پیشانی مرا

از و هم قطر گیسست که در خود گیمم ما
ا ما چو دارسیم همان قلز میم ما

مشتاق عرض جلوه خویش ست حسن دوست
از قرب مرده ده نگه تا رسای را

واماند گیسست پی سپر وادی خیال
شوق تو جاده کرد رگ خواب پای را



My cup, my verse, my wine — all are fire,
find access to my pleasure through the salamander.

Life is difficult to live without the pleasure of pain,
find out the touchstone of my causeless grief.

Drop by drop you pour out fire-water from the flask,
my lips begin to laugh at the desire for the Elysian waters.

I cannot contain the tumult raging in my inmost,
the surges consealed in the pearl are raising a tempest.

The tempestuous soul, though curbed as waves in a pearl,
my heart is brimming with a yearning to flare out.

To save my honour I shall die thirsting at the shore of the river,
if I see a frown at the forehead of the tide.

The conceit of being an autonomous drop is to cease to be,
we are freed from the vanity when turned into an ocean.

The beauty of my Love is engrossed in its own reflection,
give the failing vision the joy of such intimacy.

In the valley of fancy many a wayfarer wearies out,
your desire enthralls the sinews of their limbs of dreams.



زمن گرت نبود باور انتظار بیا
بہانہ جوئے مباحث و ستیزہ کار بیا

بیک دو شیوہ ستم دل نمیشود خرسند
ہمرگ من کہ بسامان روزگار بیا

ہلاک شیوہ تمکین مخواہ مستال را
عناں گستہ تراز باد نو بہار بیا

زما گسستی و بادگیراں گرو بستے
بیا کہ عہد وفا نیست استوار بیا

و داع و وصل جداگانہ لذتی دارد
ہزار بار برو، صد ہزار بار بیا

فریب خوردہ نازم چہانمی خواہم
یکی بہ پرش جان امیدوار بیا

ز خوی تست نہاد شکیب ناز کتر
بیا کہ دست و دلم میرود ز کار بیا

رواج صومعہ ہستی است زینہار مرو
متاع میکدہ مستی است ہوشیار بیا

حصار عافیتی گر ہوس کنی غالب
چو ما مخلقہ رندان خاکسار بیا



If you have no faith in my waiting, then come,
do not seek excuses, O quarrelsome one, come.

By one or two sweet cruelties my heart is not satiated,
come to my entire annihilation with full equipment.

Do not wish to kill the bemused by your ways of decency,
give up your authority and come as a gale of spring.

You severed your relations with us and promised to be with others,
your promises of faithfulness are not to be kept, come.

Separation and union have pleasures distinct of each,
go away a thousand times but come a hundred thousand times.

I pride myself on my being enamored, nothing more I need,
come, at least once, to enquire about a soul pining in hope.

The nature of my patience is more delicate than your nature,
come, my hands and heart are wearied out, come.

The rituals of the monastery are still in vogue, do not go there,
the wealth of the tavern is forgetfulness, come awake.

Citadels of safety if you desire, O Ghalib,
come to the guild of modest wastrels that we are.



به شغل انتظار مهوشان در خلوت شبها
سر تار نظر شد رشته تسبیح کوکبها

بروے برگ گل تا قطره شبنم نه پنداری
بهار از حسرت فرصت بدندان میگردد لبها

مخلو تنخانه کام ننگ لازم خود را
ستوه آمد دل از هنگامه غوغای مطلبها

کند گر فکر تعمیر خرابیهای ماگردون
نیاید خشت مثل استخوان بیرون ز قالبها

خوشا بیرنگی دل دستگاه شوق را نازم
نمی بالد خویش این قطره از طوفان مشربها

خوشا ندی و جوش ژنده رود و مشرب عذبخش
به لب خشکی چه میرے در سرابستان مذہبها

تو خوی پنداری و دانی که جال بردم، نمی دانی
که آتش در نهادم آب شدا از گرمی تبها

مبادا بپجو تار سبزه از همم بگسلد غالب
نفس با این ضعیفی بر نتابد شور یار بهبها



In the toil of waiting for the moons in the loneliness of nights
eyesight became the thread of the rosary of stars.

You cannot fancy what it means to produce a dew drop on a petal,
in vain desire for respite spring too bites its own lips.

Into the privy of the throat of the dragon of nothingness I flung myself,
my soul was tired of the tumult of the din of warring aims.

If ever I think of restituting my ruin brought by destiny
the bricks appear as dry bones bereft of flesh.

Salutes to you O quititude of heart, I pride myself on the ability of my
desire,
for this single drop could not rise of itself from the tempestuous ocean.

Hail to abandon, ecstasy in negligee, drinking and the prohibited water,
with dry lips what can you kill in the mirages of religion.

You see my perspiration and think that I am dead, you do not know
the fire I conceal in my inmost has changed into water with its ardour.

Take care O Ghalib, like the breaking of the thread of rosary because of
wasting away
lest your breath should stop in decrepitude by chanting God's name.



بودایی که دران خضر را عصا خفت است
بسینه می سپرم ره اگر چه پا خفت است

بدین نیاز که با تست ناز میر سدم
گدا بسایه دیوار پادشا خفت است

به صبح حشر چنین خسته رویه خیزد
که در شکایت درد و غم دوا خفت است

هوا مخالف و شب تار و بحر طوفان خیز
گسته لنگر کشتی و نا خدا خفت است

دلم به سحر و سجاده و ردا لرزد
که دزد مرحله بیدار و پار سا خفت است

درازی شب و بیداری من این همه نیست
ز نخت من خبر آرید تا کجا خفت است

بهین ز دور و مجو قرب شه که منظر را
در پیچه باز و بدر وازه اثر دها خفت است

براه خفتن من هر که بنگر و داند
که میر قافله در کار و انسر اخفت است

دگر ز ایمنی راه و قرب کعبه چه حظ
مرا که ناله ز رفتار ماند و پا خفت است



In the valley where the staff of Khizr lies in sleep,
there I shall travel on my breast, my feet are in sleep.

In humble supplication, I gravitate toward your splendour,
as a needy man lies slumbering in the shade of the king's wall.

On the morning of reckoning, he will arise haggard and face-besmeared,
complaining of pain and sorrow, the remedy remained asleep.

The wind is adverse, the night dark, and the ocean tempestuous,
the anchor of the ferry is broken and the ferryman is in slumber.

The heart quivers on looking at the rosary, the prayer-mat and the cloak,
the pirate of the way is awake and the hermit is in slumber.

The protraction of the night and my insomnia mean nothing but
I get the information that my fortune is asleep somewhere.

have a view from afar and do not wish to be near the king,
the window lies open and at the threshold a dragon lies asleep.

Whosoever looks at my lying asleep amidst the way knows:
the leader of the caravan is in action while the follower is asleep.

Safety in the highway and the proximity with K`aba
give me no pleasure for my camel is wearied and my feet are asleep.



بامنی که عاشقم سخن از ننگ و نام چیست
در امر خاص حجت دستور عام چیست

بادوست هر که باده مخلوت خورد مدام
داند که حورو کوثر و دارالسلام چیست

دلخسته غمیم و بود می دوائے ما
باخسنگان حدیث حلال و حرام چیست

در روز تیره از شب تارم نماند نیم
چون صبح نیست خود چه شناسم که شام چیست

باخیل مور میرسی از ره خوش ست فال
قاصد جگو کز آل لب نوشین پیام چیست

گفتی قفس خوش ست توای بال و پر کشود
باری علاج خسته گی بند دام چیست

از کاسه کرام نصیب ست خاک را
تا از فلک نصیب کاس کرام چیست

نیکی ز تست از تو نخواهیم مزد کار
در خود بدیم کار تو ایم انتقام چیست

غالب اگر نه خرقه و مصحف بهم فروخت
پرسد چرا که زرخ می لعل فام چیست



I am my own lover, name and fame are not my concern;
no compulsions of ordinary custom are needed under special obligations.

One who drinks in privacy with Love's kind company,
knows what a hourie is, what Kausar and what Darassalam.

Woe-begone I am, liquor alone is my panacea,
nothing are to the distressed the profane and the sacred.

In these days of darkness, I have no fear of my dark night,
when there is no dawn, how do I know what a dusk is.

You say the cage is good enough to stretch wings and feathers;
but tell me the remedy of the unrelenting fatigue of captivity.

The rising dust accompanying the galloping steed augurs well,
O messenger, say what did Love's delicate lips utter.

Nothing but dust is my fate from the bowl of the benevolent,
what shall be the portion of the bowl of Benevolent in the skies?

All good is because of you, I shall not seek wages for my toil.
Evil I am unto myself; why should you indulge in vengeance?

If Ghalib cannot sell off his cloak and turban,
how then should he enquire about the cost of the ruddy wine?



هر ذره محو جلوه حسن یگانه ایست
گویی طلسم شش جهت آینه خانه ایست

تا چار با تغافل صیاد سا ختم
پنداشتم که حلقه دام آشیانه ایست

پا بسته نورد خیالی چو واری
هر عالمی ز عالم دیگر فسانه ایست

خود داریم بفصل بهاران عنان گیسخت
گلگون شوق رارگ گل تازیانه ایست

هر ذره در طریق و فای تو منزلی
هر قطره از محیط خیالت کرانه ایست

در پرده تو چند کشم ناز عالمی
داغم ز روزگار و فراق بهانه ایست

وحشت چو شاهدان به نظر جلوه میکند
گرد ره و هوا سر زلفی و شانه ایست

مرنج از شب تار و بیا به بزم نشاط
که پنبه سر مینای باده متابست

ز وضع روزن دیوار میتوان دانست
که چشم غمکده ما براه سیلابست



Every particle is rapt in reflecting one beauty,
say the wondrous six dimensions are a mirror bewilderment.

Helplessly I conform to the proroguing of the ensnarer,
advising myself that there in the snare lies my abode.

Wander in your fancy and if you do not come out,
every world that you step in is a prologue to another world.

The springtide breaks all the bridles of my self-control,
to the steed of my desire the rose is the whip.

Every speck in the journey of love is a destination,
every drop in the ocean of your thoughts is itself a shore.

How long shall I bear with the blandishment of the world: your veneer?
submerged in the mire of the world my separation from You is vain.

When ardour itself becomes perceptible to the seekers,
the dust of the way and the wind become Love's curls and comb.

Do not worry, come out of your gloom to the bevy of pleasures,
the moon that there is, is but the lid of the flask of wine.

The way there is a crevice in the wall of confinement, you can say,
it is the eye of the gloom-house in wait of the coming deluge.



منع ما از باده عرض احتسابی پیش نیست
محتسب افشردۀ انگور آبی پیش نیست

رنج و راحت بر طرف شاید پرستانیم ما
دوزخ از سر گرمی نازش عتالی پیش نیست

خارج از هنگامه سر تا سر به بیکاری گزشت
رشته عمر خضر مد حسالی نیست

قطره و موج و کف و گرداب جیخونست بس
ایں من و مائی که میبالد حجابی پیش نیست

خویش را صورت پرستال هرزه رسوا کرده اند
جلوه می نامند و در معنی نقابی پیش نیست

شوخی اندیشه خویشست سر تا پای ما
تار و پود هستی ما پیچ و تابی پیش نیست

زخم دل لب تشنه شور تبسم های تست
ایں نمکدال ها پنجم ما سرالی پیش نیست

جلوه کن منت منه از ذره کمتر نیستم
حسن با این تابنا کی آفتابی پیش نیست

چند روز نگیس بکته دلکش تکلف بر طرف
دیده ام دیوان غالب انتخالی پیش نیست



Prohibiting me wine is nothing but a way of inquisition.
O inquisitor, the extract of grapes is nothing but water!

Ignoring pain and pleasure we adore beauty.
Hell, too, is nothing but a beautiful way of reproof.

Divorced from strife, life is entirely a vain loafing,
the life of a Khizr, too, would be just prolongation of counting.

A drop, a tide, foam, a vortex — all are the Bactrus,
this being of 'I' and 'we' is nothing but a concealment.

The adorers of forms vainly got themselves defamed,
what they call evident is in essence a curtain.

All this self-concern of ours makes life beautiful.
this writhing in agony is the warp and woof of existence.

Thirsty-lipped is the wound of my heart for the salt of your smile,
the two salt-cellars of my two eyes are only a mirage.

Reveal Yourself, not to favour me, for I am not less than a particle,
the beauty of the sun is nothing but the shining of particles.

A few colourful charming subtilities, ignore formalities.
I saw Ghalib's book, it is only a selection.



عکس تنش را در آب لرزه بود هم ز موج
بیم نگاه خودش کارگر افتاده است

خاطر بلبل بجوی قطره شبنم مگوی
کز پی گوش گل ناله تر افتاده است

از نگه سر خوست کام تمنا کند
آینه ساده دل دیده و افتاده است

اودلی از ما گذاخت و این فست کرم ساخت
ناله ما از نگاه شورش تر افتاده است

ریشک دهانت گزاشت غنچه گل چو شکفت
دید که از روی کار پرده بر افتاده است

مستی دل دید را محرم اسرار کرد
بنمودی پرده دار پرده در افتاده است

آل همه آزادگی وین همه دلداگی
حیف که غالب ز خویش بنجر افتاده است

در هیچ نسخه معنی لفظ امید نیست
فرهنگ نا مهای تمنا نوشته ایم

آغشته ایم هر سر خارج نبون دل
قانون باغبانی صحرا نوشته ایم



The reflection of her frame in water quivers with a ripple,
the awe in her own eyes produces this effect.

Searching for the heart of the bulbul, do not call it a drop of dew,
lying in the shade of a rose it gives out fluid calls.

In the inebriated glances, there is but desire for herself,
vainly thinks the naive mirror that it has the power to reflect.

Emanating from the inmost and making my breath hot,
my calls are more vivacious than her sight.

The flower-bud gave up envying her lips, when it blossomed,
and beheld that the veil is lifted away from what was hidden.

In its pixilation the heart confided the secret to the eyes,
and the demented veil-keeper cast away the veil.

In his freedom that he had and in his giving away the heart,
Ghalib, alas! still lies ignorant of his real being.

In no text does there lie a hope of meaning,
I write nothing but the compendium of the tales of desire.

I have wetted the tip of every thorn with my heart's blood,
and thus written the prescripts of the gardener's vocation.



دل برد و حق آنست که دلبر نتوان گفت
بیدا و توان دید و ستمگر نتوان گفت

در رزم گهش نا چچ و خنجر نتوان برد
در بزم گهش باده و ساغر نتوان گفت

رخشندگی، ساعد و گردن نتوان جست
زیندگه یاره و پرگر نتوان گفت

پیوسته دهد باده و ساقی نتوان خواند
همواره تراشد بت و آذر نتوان گفت

از حوصله یاری مطلب صاعقه تیز است
پروانه شو اینجا ز سمندر نتوان گفت

هنگامه سر آمد چه زنی دم ز نظم
گر خود سستی رفت به محشر نتوان گفت

در گرم روی سایه و سرچشمه نجو نیم
با ما سخن از طوبی و کوثر نتوان گفت

آن راز که در سینه، نهان است نه وعظ ست
بر دار توان گفت و به منبر نتوان گفت

کاری عجب افتاد بدیس شیفته مارا
مومن نبود غالب و کافر نتوان گفت



He carried away my heart, yet He cannot be called the heart dweller,
one may see His cruelties, yet cannot be called a tormentor.

In His battlefield, one needs not be equipped with a spear and sword,
in His banquet, one needs not ask for wine and goblets.

One may not see the brightness of His arms and His neck,
one cannot define the adornments of His bracelets and the collar.

All the time He offers you vintage, yet you cannot call Him Saqi.
He creates ever-new icons, yet you cannot name Him Aazar.

Do not expect succour from your courage, the lightning is abrupt,
be like a moth here and do not wish to be a salamander.

The strife is over, then what is the use of groaning?
Self-affliction, too, has ended, you cannot complain of it on resurrection

In the heat of ongoing, I do not seek shades and springs.
vain is, then, to talk to me of the Tuba and the Kausar.

The secret lying concealed in your bosom cannot be sermonised,
it can only be proclaimed on a gibbet, not on any pulpit.

A strange dilemma is facing this enamoured man of ours.
Ghalib, who is not a *Momin*, yet cannot be called an infidel.

هجوم گل بگلستان هلاک شو قم کرد
که جانمانده و جای تو پیمان خالیست

نه شاهی بنما شانه بیدی بنوا
ز غنچه گلبن و از بلبل آشیان خالیست

کنم به جنبش دل شیشه از پری لبریز
سرم زباد فسون سخی زبان خالیست

امام شهر به مسجد اگر رهیم ندهد
نه جای من به نیایش که مغان خالیست

خراب ذوق بر ددوش کیستم غالب
که چون هلال سراپایم از میان خالیست

شعیده که بآتش نسوخت ابرائیم
بهین که ملی شر و شعله متوانم سوخت

عیاره جلوه نازش گر فتن ارزانی
هزار بار به تقریب امتحانم سوخت

مراد میدان گل در گمان فکند امروز
که باز بر شاخ گل آشیانم سوخت

چه مایه گرم برون آمدی ز خلوت غیر
که شکوه درد دل و پیغاره بر زبانم سوخت



The multitude of roses in the garden have killed my desire,
no room is left open, yet your place remains unoccupied.

Neither the beloved nor the wailing lover are there to behold the scene:
the garden is bereft of flowers and the nests are abandoned by birds.

With a dint of desire, I poured the *Pari* into the glass,
my head is empty of the winds of imagination and beauty of exploration.

If the Imam of the city-mosque grants me no entry,
my place in the tavern will not be left empty.

In the desire of whose embrace are my arms wearying out,
that like the crescent I have been hollowed of my centre?

You must have heard how Abraham was not harmed by the fire,
but look how without a spark and flame I am consumed.

Vain is it to hold a mirror to the splendour of her beauty,
a thousand times have I been burnt undergoing the ordeal.

Today the blossoming of the rose in my fancy makes me guess,
that once again my nest at the end of the bough is ablaze.

So fiery I am to see you returning from the privy of my rival,
that all complaints in my heart and abuses on my tongue are burnt out.

نشاط معنویان از شراخانه تست
فسون بابلیان فصلی از فسانه تست

بجام آینه حرف جم و سکندر چیست
که هرچه رفت بهر عهد در زمانه تست

فریب حسن بتان پیشکش اسیر توام
اگر خطست و گر خال دام و دانه تست

هم از احاط تست اینکه در جہاں مارا
قدم به تہکده و سر بر آستانه تست

سپر را تو بتاراج ما گماشتی
نه هرچه دزد زما برد در خزانه تست

مراچه جرم گر اندیشه آسمان پیاست
نه تیز گامی تو سن ز تازیانه تست

کماں ز چرخ و خدنگ از بلا و پرز قضا
خدنگ خورده این صیدگه نشانه تست

سپاس جود تو فرض است آفرینش را
دریں فریضه دو گیتی همان دو گانه تست

تو اے که مخو خن گستران پیشنی
مباش منکر غالب که در زمانه تست



All the pleasures of the truthful come from your tavern,
all phantasms of Babylon are a part of your tale.

Why remember the chalice and the mirror of Jamshid and Alexander?
for whatever happened in any time, happened in your time.

Your captive I am, I present to You my conceit of beauty,
if the down and mole on her cheek are Your snare and bait.

It is within your premises that here in the world of ours,
our steps are in the idol-house our foreheads on Your threshold.

The sky you have appointed to keep us harrying,
Whatever is looted from us is but from Your treasure.

What is my fault, if I have a longing to measure the skies,
when the speed of the steed is because of Your scourge?

The bow belongs to the sky, arrow to calamity and the feather to destiny,
But in this hunting forest whosoever is hit is Your butt.

All creation here is bound to be engrossed in thanksgiving,
in this obligation both worlds are in unison.

You readers, engrossed in the poets of the past,
do not ignore Ghalib who belongs to your time.

غبار طرف مزارم به چچ و تالی هست
هنوز در رگ اندیشه اضطرابی هست

ببانگ صور سراز خاک بر نمی دارم
هنوز در نظرم چشم نیم خوانی هست

ز سردی نفس نامه بر توای دانست
که نارسیده پیام مرا جوانی هست

بهرزه جان به غلط دادم و ندانستم
که یار دیر پسندی و زود یابی هست

نظر فروز ادا هابد شمن ارزانے
بمن سپار اگر داغ سینه تالی هست

ز شوری نمک پر شش نهانی تست
اگر مرا جگر تشنه عتالی هست

خود اولین قدح می بنوش و ساقی شو
که آخر از طرف تست گر حجابی هست

ز سرد مری ایام نیستیم نژند
که در خرابه ماروی آفتابی هست

بهار بند بود بر شگال های غالب
دریں خزاں کده هم موسم شرابی هست



The dust blowing towards my tomb is still astir
yet there is some commotion in the veins of my dread.

Hearing the clarion call, I shall not raise my head from earth
my vision is still engrossed in those half-sleeping eyes.

The cold sighs of the messenger silently intimate
the reply that my message did not have any effect.

I wrongly gave away my soul and did not know
that my friend was easygoing but prompt in taking.

Go on favouring my enemies with your blandishments
bestow on me, if you can, a blister of bosom-blare.

In your persistent query about my health, there is a hint
if I still have thirst for more chiding.

You first drink the vintage yourself and then be a Saqi,
for if there is any veil, it is your own selfhood.

For the coldness of the times we are not gloomy,
it is because of our ruin that there is the face of the sun.

The real spring of India is the rainy season, O Ghalib,
in our autumnal abode lies the season of drinking.



آزاد گیت سازی اما صدا نه دارد
از هر چه در گزشتیم آواز پانه نداد

عشقست و ناتوانی حسست و سرگرانی
جو رو جفا نتانم مهر و وفا ندارد

در هم فشار خود را تا در رسد دماغی
در بزم ماز تنگی پیمانه جان ندارد

ای سبزه سر ره از جور پاچه نالی
در کیش روزگاران گل خون بهمان دارد

هر مطلبی که ریزد از خامه فغانیست
جز نغمه محبت سازم نوانه دارد

جان در غمت فشاندن مرگ از قفا ندارد
تن در بلا فکندن بیم بلا نه ندارد

چشم سیاه دارد یعنی بهمانه بیند
روی چو ماه دارد اما بهمان ندارد

چون لعل تست غنچه اما سخن نداند
چون چشم تست زرگس اما حیاء ندارد

آتش گداز خاکی بادش تف بخاری
دبلی همرگ غالب آب و هوایه ندارد



Freedom is such music as has no sound,
whichever way we go, we walk with no sound of feet.

My passion and my feebleness, your beauty and your pride,
I cannot endure any torments, nor can you have compassion.

Compress the diffusion of your self to contain it in your brain,
for in our thick gathering, there is no room for a goblet.

O grass, why do you complain of the tramelling feet,
there in this world, even a culled rose has no blood-money.

Every opening hemstitch of my songs is a cry,
my music knows no tone except the lays of love.

One who wearies away in love, cannot be conquered by death,
one who flings himself into calamity has no dread.

What if she has black eyes, she has not them to look at us,
what if she has a moon-like face, it is not to shine for us.

Your vermillion lips are a closed bud, knowing no speech,
narcissus are your eyes, but without any modesty.

Delhi-waters are mud, Delhi winds are hot fumes,
for the death of one Ghalib Delhi has no water and air.



بدان پرست نیازم که بهر تسخیرش
ز مهر دل بزبان رخصت فسون ندهد

جنون مگر ادبش نیست بلکه خودداریست
که تن به همدی عقل ذو فتون ندهد

بیوی گنج گزیدم خرابه ورنه جنون
بهر زه ذوق دلاویزی سکون ندهد

بمن گرای و وفا جو که ساده بر بمنم
لبسنگ هر که دهد دل بغمزه چون ندهد

ترا بحر به چه حاجت نه آں بود غالب
که جان به لذت آویزش زروں ندهد

خوشا بریدن راه وفا که در هر گام
جهین ز پای با نداز نقش پا ریزد

بهشت خویش توانی شدن اگر داری
دلی که خون شود و رنگ مدعا ریزد

بروز وصل در آغو شم آنچنان بفشار
که بی من از لب من شکوه توواریزد

شتاب وزهد چه نا قدر دانی هستیست
بلا بجان جوانان پارسا ریزد



I surrender to the Pari only to conquer her.
In love the heart is divorced from the tongue that shows no charm.

Don't call it madness nor my reverence; it is my self-esteem
that my body refuses to give company to reason and art.

For the smack of the treasure I wander in wilderness. Otherwise,
my frenzy for mere desire would not give up the luring peace.

You expect faith and love from me, for I am a simple idol-worshipper
who gives away his heart to a stone, why not to your charms.

You need no caprice, for Ghalib is not a person
not to surrender his soul for the pleasure of captivity.

The path of love is travelled happily when, at every step,
the forehead, like the feet, leaves prints on it.

You shall be an Elysium unto yourself, if you possess
a heart that dissolves into blood and strews the colour of desire.

On the day of union clasp me in your arms and squeeze me
that without my effort all complaints are poured out from my lips

Your prime and continence together, what a disregard of the value of
Ruin, cease the youth, that wearies out in continence. life!

دل اسباب طرب گم کرده در بند غم تان شد
زراعتگاه دهنقان میشود چون باغ ویران شد

گر قسم کز تغافل طاقت ما باج میگیرد
حریف یک نگاه بیحای تو نتوان شد

تو گستردی بھر ادام و از رشک گرفتاری
کف خاکم برنگ قمری بسمل پرافشان شد

جنون کردیم و مجنون شره گشتیم از خرد مندی
بروں دادیم راز غم بعنوانی که پنهان شد

فراغت بر نتابد همت مشکل پسند من
زد شواری بجاں مے اقدام کاری که آسان شد

چه پر سی وجه حیرانی که هنگام تماشایت
نگاه از بنودیه دست و پا گم کرده مثر گان شد

زما گرم است این هنگامه بگر شور هستی را
قیامت میدمد از پرده خاکی که انسان شد

نشاط انگیزی انداز سعی چاک را نازم
به پیراهن نمیگنجد گریبانی که دامن شد

خدا را ای بتان گردد دلش گردیدنی دارد
دریغا آبروی دیر گر غالب مسلمان شد



Bereft of all means of pleasure, the heart is now the slave of bread,
nay, a peasant's crop-field has become of the deserted garden.

My endurance profits on your apathy to me,
for I could not stand as a match to your awful glance.

You spread out the snare in the wilderness, and for my fear of lure,
this handful of dust burnishes like a warbling bird.

My craft of madness made me famous as Majnoon,
in showing off the secret of my grief under the title, I got it veiled.

The strength of my taste for the difficult finds no let up,
in a dilemma I find myself when something easy is to do.

Why do you inquire about the cause of my daze for it is your own doing,
in ecstasy eyes lose their strength and only the eye-lashes remain.

The commotion of life gets its heat from us, see its tumult,
the doomsday sprouts from this veneer of dust, called man.

In tearing my raiment, I find my pleasure,
Lo! the collar is not contained in the garment, it is become the skirt.

O idols pedestalled in my heart, beware, if you can see,
what shall be the fate of this temple if Ghalib turns a muslim?

نو میدی ما گردش ایام ندارد
روزی که سیه شد سحر و شام ندارد

بو سم لب دلدار و گزیدن نتوانم
نرمست دلم حوصله کام ندارد

هر ذره خاکم ز تورقصان بهوائیست
دیوانگی شوق سر انجام نداد

روتن به بلا ده که دگر بیم بلا نیست
مرغ قفسی کشمش دام ندارد

بلبل پنجم بگرو پروانه به محفل
شوقست که در وصل هم آرام ندارد

هر رشح باندازه هر حوصله ریزند
میخانه توفیق خم و جام ندارد

چه خیر از سخنی کز دردن جان نبود
بریده باد زبانی که خونچکان نبود

ز خویش رفته ام و فرصتی طمع دارم
که بازگردم و جز دوست ارمغان بود

امید بلهوس و حسرت من افزون شد
ازین نوید که اندوه جاو دال بود



This despair of ours has no revolution of days,
the day that was once darkened knows no dusk or dawn.

I kiss my Love's lips but dare not bite them,
timid is my heart with no courage to act.

Every particle of my dust dances in the air for you;
the delirium of desire knows no culmination.

Consign yourself to calamity and have no dread,
the caged bird never feels the pain of confinement.

Look at the *bulbul* in gardens and the moth in company,
their ardour is such as knows no composure.

Every drop is doled out in accordance with one's desire,
in the tavern of grace there is no flask and chalice.

What can be the outcome of the expression that emanates not from the
The tongue that sheds no blood be cut off! inmost?

I journeyed away from my self and a desire for rest,
to come back to my own self and wish no gain but my friend.

The hope of the lustful and my dejection both are inflamed
with the happy news that sorrow is not everlasting.

نازم آئین کرم را که سرگرمی خویش
دشت را شمع و چراغ شب تارا است بهار

شوخی خوی ترا قاعده دانست خزان
خونی روی ترا آینه دار است بهار

در غمت غازه خساره هوش است جنون
در رهت شانه گیسوی غبار است بهار

هم حریفان ترا طرف بساطت چمن
هم شهیدان ترا شمع مزار است بهار

بعد مشکین ترا غایب سالیست نسیم
رخ رنگین ترا غازه نگار است بهار

وحشتی میدمد از گرد پر افشانی رنگ
از کمین گاه که رم خورده شکار است بهار

به جهان گرمی هنگامه حسن است ز عشق
شورش اندوز ز غوغای هزار است بهار

خارها در ره سودا زدگان خواهد ریخت
ورنه در کوه و بیابان چه کار است بهار

زاهد از حور بهشته بجز این نشاسد
که شود دست زد شوق و بکارت نرود



I exult at the method of grace that with its own ardour,
spring is the candle and lamp of the dark night to the desert.

Autumn is proficient in the rules of your nature,
the mirror holder for the beauty of your face is the spring.

In pining for you, my frenzy is the rouge of the face of wits
in the way to you, the comb of the tresses of the dust is the spring.

For the companions of yours, the garden is the border of a carpet.
For the martyrs of yours, a candle of the tomb is the spring.

Zephyr adds ambergris to your fragrant curls,
Spring is busy in applying rouge to your colourful face.

Wilderness appears in the dust of the fluttering of the wings of colour.
A prey, frightened away from its hidey-hole, is the spring.

In this world the heart of the furor of beauty is because of love.
Gathering tumult from the din of the thrush is the spring.

The spring intends scattering thorns in the paths of the demented.
Else what engagement has it there in mountains and wilderness?

The sage knows no more than this about the houris of Elysium,
that he would deflorate them yet leave their chastity unravished.

ای ذوق نو اسخی بازم بخروش آور
غوغای شبنخونی بر بنگه هوش آور

گر خود نجهد از سر از دیده فرو بارم
دل خون کن و آل خون را در سینه بخوش آور

هاں همدم فرزانه دانی ره ویرانه
شمعی که نخواهد شد از باد خموش آور

گر منع بکند و ریزد بر کف نه و راهی شو
ورشه به سبوت خشد بر دار و بدوش آور

ریحان دمد از مینا را مش چمد از قلقل
آں در ره چشم افکن این از پی گوش آور

گاهی به سبکدستی از باده ز خولشتم بر
گاهی بسیه مستی از نغمه بهوش آور

یارب ز جنون طرح غمی در نظرم ریز
صد بادیه در قالب دیوار و درم ریز

هر برق که نظاره گدازست نهادش
بگذار و به پیمانه ذوق نظرم ریز

مسکین خبر از لذت آزار ندارد
خارم کن و در رهگذر چاره گرم ریز



O my passion for melody, bring me back my ecstasy,
produce the commotion of nightly assault in the house of my
consciousness.

If it does not struggle itself, I shall pour it out through the eyes,
melting the heart into blood and making it flare up in the bosom.

My prudent companion! You are acquainted with the ways of the
wilderness,
get me a torch that cannot be extinguished by the wind.

If the tavern-keeper pours it out from a gourd, receive it in your hand and
leave,
if he offers it in a flask exalted, get it on your shoulder.

Sweet basil blossoms in the flask and music flows with the dribble,
lay that one in the paths of sight and bring this one for the ears to hear.

Now, artfully make me oblivious of myself with wine,
and then in dark booze arouse my consciousness with a sweet lay.

O God, in frenzy acquaint me with a new manner of pain,
create a hundred wilds within the four walls of my mould.

Every lightnings that has the habit of melting spectacles,
send away and pour it into the cup of the desire of vision.

The poor man has no intimation of the pleasure of pain,
turn me into thorns and strew them in my redeemer's paths.

بیاو جوش تمنای دید نم بگر
چو اشک از سر مژگان چید نم بگر

ز من بجرم تپیدن کناره میکردی
بیا بخاک من و آر میدنم بگر

شنیده ام که نه بینی و نا امید نیم
ندیدن تو شنیدم، شنیدنم بگر

و میدانه و بالید و آشیان گه شد
در انتظار هما دام چیدنم بگر

نیاز مندی حسرت کشان نمیدانی
نگاه من شو و دزدیده دیدنم بگر

اگر هوای تماشای گلستان داری
بیاو عالم در خون تپیدنم بگر

جفای شانه که تارگی گسته زان سر زلف
ز پشت دست بدندان گزیدنم بگر

بهار من شو و گل گل شگفتنم دریارب
مخلوتم برو ساغر کشیدنم بگر

تو اضعی بکنم بی تو اضعی غالب
بسایه خم تیغس خمیدنم بگر



Come and see the spate of desire in my eyes,
see how the drops of tears trickle from my eye-lashes.

You distanced yourself from me for my fault of being aflame,
come and see how in dust I rest now in tranquillity.

I have heard that you will not see me; I am not despondent;
your not seeing me, I have heard but come and see my hearing it.

The seed sprouted, grew and became a place of nests.
See how I am waiting with my snare for the Phoenix.

You do not know the imploration of the grief-stricken;
you be my eyesight and see how secretly I look at you.

If you have a desire to enjoy a garden scene,
come and see how I am afire, being blood-bedaubed.

Cruelty of the comb, a hair is cut from the tip of the lock,
see how I tear with my teeth the flesh of the back of my hand.

Be my spring and see how I shall burgeon.
Solitarily come to me and see how I shall quaff from the chalice.

I cannot be affable without affability in return (O Ghalib).
See how I bow under the shadow of the bow of the sword.

لی دوست ز بس خاک فشانند بیم بسر بر
صد چشمه روانست بدان راهگزر بر

غلتانی اشکم بود از حسرت دیدار
آیست نگاهم که پیچد به گهر بر

از خلد و سقر تا چه دهد دوست که دارم
عیشی خیال اندرو داغی بجز بر

بالد نخود آل مایه که در باغ نه گنجد
سروی که کشندش به تمنای تو در بر

عمری که بسودای تو گنجینه غم بود
اینک بتو دادیم تو در عیش بسر بر

مطرب بغزل خوانی و غالب بسماع است
ساقی می و آلات می از حلقه بدر بر

نخود شمار و وفاهای من ز مردم پرس
من حساب جفاهای خویشتن یاد آر

چه دید جان من از چشم پر خمار، بگوی
چه رفت بر سرم از زلف پر شکن یاد آر

هزار خسته و رنجور در جهان داری
یکی ز غالب رنجور خسته تن یاد آر



Without my love, I lave my head with dust,
what if a hundred rivulets flow along the route?

The treasure of my tears is due to my pining for my Love,
the light of my eyes is the lustre of pearls.

What gift can my Friend give me out of Paradise or Hell?
My mind is full of joy, and there is a scar in my heart.

So luxuriantly grows the cypress that the garden cannot hold it.
Smitten with you, they now turn it outdoors.

The life that in your love was a treasure of pain,
this I gift away to you for you to enjoy.

The singer is rapt in singing, and Ghalib in listening,
O Saqi, take away from your circle the wine and what other things go
with it.

Fathom my devotion to you and seek the proof from others,
take stock of your cruelties which you inflicted on me.

What did my soul behold in your eyes flushed with wine?
What devastation have your locks worked in my head?

A thousand wearied afflicted ones you have in your world,
just show a little care to Ghalib, languid and worn out.

لطفی به تحت هر نگه خشم گین شناس
آرایش جبین شکر فان ز چین شناس

بازا که کار خود به نگاهت سپرده ایم
مارا خجل ز تفرقه مهر و کین شناس

داغ غم که وحشت تو بی فرود ز انتظار
جز صید دام دیده نباشد کمین شناس

آرایش زمانه زبیداد کرده اند
هر خون که ریخت غازه روی زمین شناس

در راه عشق شیوه دالش قبول نیست
حیضت سعی رهرو پا از جبین شناس

میخواهد انتقام ز هجران کشید نه
خون گرمی دل از نفس آتشین شناس

بی پرده تاب محرمی رازما مجوے
خون گشتن دل از مژه و آستین شناس

از دهر غیر گردش رنگی پدید نیست
ایں روضه را سراب گل و یاسمین شناس

بی غم نهاد مرو گرامی نمی شود
زنهار قدر خاطر اندو هگین شناس



Know the joy underneath the fearful glance
and see how a frown decks the glorious forehead.

We ourselves assigned the supervision of our deeds to you,
now we are insulted by your discrimination of love and hate.

My grief is that in your waiting the terror is without increase,
in ambush, without a chase, there cannot be a snare of sight.

It is tyranny that beautifies this world of ours,
every drop of blood that is shed is rouge to the face of earth.

Ways of wisdom are not needed in the path of love,
pity the traveller's use of feet do it with your forehead.

He takes revenge in separation by extracting
hot blood from my heart, see my fiery breath.

Do not seek the heat of deprivation without a veil,
see my blood-turned heart through my eye-lashes and sleeves.

Nothing manifests from eternity except these changing colours,
reckon the garden as a mirage of roses and jasmine.

Without pain the nature of a fire-stone cannot be excellent,
take care and know the value of this disposition to melancholy.

دود سودای تترق بست آسمان نامید مش
دیده بر خواب پریشان زد جهان نامید مش

و هم خاکی ریخت در چشمم بیابان دید مش
قطره بگذاخت بحر بیکراں نامید مش

باد دامن زد بر آتش نو بهار را خواند مش
داغ گشت آل شعله از مستی خزان نامید مش

غر بتم ناساز گار آمد وطن فهمید مش
کرد تنگی حلقه دام آشیان نامید مش

بود در پهلوی تمکینی که دل می گفتمش
رفت از شوخی به آیینی که جان نامید مش

دل زباز را زردان آشنا ییها نخواست
گاه بهمان گفتمش گاهی فلان نامید مش

در سلوک از هر چه پیش آمد گذشتن داشتم
کعبه دیدم نقش پای رهروان نامید مش

بر امید شیوه صبر آزمایی زیستم
تو بریدی از من و من امتحان نامید مش

بود غالب عندلیبی از گلستان عجم
من ز غفلت طوطی هندوستان نامید مش



Smoke weaves a dark curtain and I call it the sky,
Eyes encounter a dissonant dream, and I call it the world.

Phantasy throws dust into my eyes, I envision a desert,
a drop of liquid I descry and name it an ocean.

Wind spreads its skirt over fire, and I read spring in it,
in frenzy the flames produce a scar and I call it autumn.

Languishing in the alien land, I assume it is my country,
when the noose of the tangle tightens, I call it my nest.

While it remains humble in my side, I call it my heart,
when it wanders off in flippancy, I call it my soul.

The heart didn't want the tongue to be a confidant of the friend,
the tongue thus calls him now such and then calls it so.

In the ways of truth all that comes to me, I take it past,
I see the Ka'ba and term it the footprint of the wayfarer.

I live in the hope of finding the fruit of my forbearance,
forsaken though I am by you, a tribulation I call it.

Ghalib there was, the nightingale from the garden of Persia,
but in ignorance do I name him the parrot of India.

چون عکس پل به سیل بذوق بلا بر قص
جارا نگاه دار و هم از خود جدا بر قص

ذوقیست جستجو چه زنی دم ز قطع راه
رفتار گم کن و بصدای در آ بر قص

سر سبز بوده و به چمن ها چمیده ایم
ای شعله در گداز خس و خار ما بر قص

هم بر نوای چغد طریق سماع گیر
هم در هوای جنبش بال ها بر قص

در عشق اینساط پایان نمیرسد
چون گرد باد خاک شود در هوا بر قص

فر سوده رسمهای عزیزان فرو گذار
در سورنوحه خوان و بهنرم عزا بر قص

چون چشم صا لجان دولای منافقان
در نفس خود مباحث ولی بر ملا بر قص

از سوختن الم ز شگفتن طرب مجوی
یهوده در کنار سموم و صبا بر قص

غالب بدین نشاط که وابسته که
بر خویشتن ببال و بیند بلا بر قص



Dance for calamity's sake as a bridge's reflection on the spate,
dance with eyes fastened to a point, away from your own self.

In the desire for your quest, ignore the end of the journey,
abandon the pace in the direction and dance to the jingle of the bell.

There was verdure and bloom, and thus we ambled to the garden,
O flame now dance in the consumption of straws and thorns.

Enjoy a melodious warble even in the screams of the owl,
and dance in the wind caused by the tremor of Huma's¹ wing.

In the ways of love no pleasure is there to be sought,
be a dust-devil and dance in the whirls of wind.

Ignore the obsolete rituals of those you hold so dear,
dance among the mourners and among the assembly of wailers.

Be not like the wrath of the preacher nor like the friendship of a
slanderer,
come out of the confines of your selfhood and dance in self-abandon.

Vain is it to find pain in burning and joy in blooming,
dance without a purpose away from simoom and breeze.

Ghalib, why remain tethered to the ritual of gains and rewards?
Be with your own self and dance to the rise and fall of calamities.

1. A fabulous bird supposed to fly constantly in the air without touching the ground, prognosticating a crown to the head it overshades.

از عشق و حسن ما تو با هم دگر در گفتگو
خسرو به مجنون یک طرف، شیرین به لیلی یک طرف

تا دل به دنیا داده ام در کشکش افتاده ام
اندوه فرصت یک طرف، ذوق تماشا یک طرف

ای بسته در بزم اثر بر غارت هو شتم کمر
مطرب بالخان یک طرف ساقی بهبهایک طرف

خار افکنان در راه من ترسان ز برق آه من
طفلان نادان یک طرف پیران دانا یک طرف

وامانده در راه وفا از بخودی ها جانجا
نقدم بمنزل یک طرف ر ختم بهر ایک طرف

با دیده و دل از دوسو ماندم بیند غم فرو
اندوه پنهان یک طرف آشوب پیدا یک طرف

ای آئینه پیش نظر مستانه بر خود جلوه گر
رحمی بجان خویش کن غمخواری مایک طرف

غالب چه تسکینم دهی در هجر آن سرو سهی
ر شک ر قییم میشد فرط تمنا یک طرف

تکیه بر عالم و عابد نتوان کرد که هست،
آل یکی بیهمده گوا این و گری بیهمده کوش



Through my love and your beauty, we are in mutual discourse,
while Khusraw is with Majnoon and Shireen with Laila.

Ever since to the world I gave over my soul, I have been in a dilemma,
Disgust with time on the one side, and love of the spectacle, on the
other.

○ You, who are bent on confounding my wits in this assemblage of
effects,
the singer with his melodies is on the one side, and the Saqi with his cup
on the other.

The thorn-strewers in my way are terrified with the lightnings of my
sighs,
the oafish urchins on the one side, and the wise oldsters on the other.

To be crestfallen in the journey or to be ecstatic in wandering,
to have ready-money for the inn on the one side or to have provisions for
the desert on the other.

Pulled in two directions by my eyes and heart, I am low in anguish,
the hidden pain on the one hand and the visible commotion on the other.

○ you holding a mirror before you and rapt in the reflections of yourself,
have pity on yourself and leave your compassion for us aside.

Ghalib, what solace can you give me in my estrangement from the
cypress-like Love?
The envy of my rival pulls me in one direction while my overwhelming
desire pulls me to the other side.

گفتم ز شادی بنو دم گنجیدن آسان در بغل
تنگم کشید از سادگی در وصل جانان در بغل

نازم خطرور زیدنش و آن هرزه دل لرزیدنش
چینی بهازی بر صیین دستی بدستان در بغل

آه از تنک پیر اهنی کافزون شدش تردامنه
تا خوی بروں داد از حیا گردید عریاں در بغل

دانش نمی در باخته خود را زمن نشناخته
رخ در کنارم ساخته از شرم پنهان در بغل

کاهم به پهلو خفته خوش بستی لب از حرف و سخن
کاهم بازو مانده سر سودی ز نخدان در بغل

می خورده در بستان سرامستانه گشتی سو بسو
خود ساییده او را ازو صد باغ و بستان در بغل

چون غنچه دیدی در چمن، گفتی بگلبن کت زمن
چون رفته تاوک از جگر چون مانده پیکان در بغل

هاں غالب خلوت نشین یمی چنان عیشی چنین
جاسوس سلطان در کمین مطلوب سلطان در بغل

در عرض شوق صرفه نه بردیم در وصال
در شکوه های خواه خواهش گرفته ایم



I said in ecstasy 'It is not easy to contain me in your arms'.
Naively she squeezed me at the time of union in her arms.

I pride myself on seeing her scared of me with a tremulous heart,
feigning to have a frown at her forehead while nestling under my arms.

Ah! The sparsness of her raiment augmented my incontinence.
Before she unveiled her face in modesty, I gathered her naked into my
arms.

In intoxication she lost her reason and could not tell herself from me,
turning her face to my side, she hid it in her arms.

Sometimes lying joyfully beside me, she would not utter a word,
sometimes resting her head on my arm she rubbed it with her chin.

Having quaffed wine she strolled in the pleasure garden,
her shadow itself carried a hundred vineyards under her arms.

Seeing a half-open bud in the garden, she told it how
a dart runs through the liver and a spear penetrates the arm.

Let there be no bread in delight, O secluded Ghalib,
the Sultan's spy is in hiding, but the Sultan's object of passions is in
your arms.

In intimating my love I did not gain anything at the moment of union.
I remained entangled in uncalled-for grumbling.

بیا که قاعده آسمان بگر دانیم
قضا بگر دش رطل گراں بگر دانیم

ز چشم و دل به تماشا تمتع اندوزیم
ز جان و تن بمدار ازیال بگر دانیم

بگوشه بنشینیم و در فراز کنیم
بکوچه بر سر ره پاسبان بگر دانیم

اگر ز شهنشودگیر و دار نندیشم
وگر ز شاه رسد ارمغان بگر دانیم

اگر کلیم شود همزبان سخن کنیم
وگر خلیل شود میهمان بگر دانیم

ز جوش سینه سحر را نفس فرو بندیم
بلای گرمی روز از جهان بگر دانیم

بجنگ باج مستان شاخساری را
تمی سبد ز در گلستان بگر دانیم

به صلح بال فشانان صبح گاهی را
ز شاخسار سوی آشیان بگر دانیم

همن وصال تو باور نمی کند غالب
بیا که قاعده آسمان بگر دانیم



Come, let us change the order of the sky
and alter destiny by circulating the heavy cup.

With our eyes and heart we shall dote on the spectacle
with our soul and heart we shall turn it to our advantage.

We shall occupy a corner in tavern and keep the door ajar,
and send the policeman on the round to some alley.

What if there are troops to arrest, we shall not care,
and if they bring us a gift from the king, we shall send it back.

If an interlocutor with Gods speaks our tongue we shall not speak,
and if a friend of God arrives as guest we shall shove him out.

With the heat of our bosom we shall stifle the dawn,
and save the world from the scorch of the day.

If wood-cutters come to ravish the verdure of the garden,
with empty baskets we shall push them out from the entrance.

We shall peacefully make the birds of the morning
go back from the grove and retire to their nests.

I, Ghalib, cannot fancy union with my Love,
come, let us change the order of the sky.

زخمه بر تار رگ جان میزنم
کس چه داند تاچه دستاں میزنم

باز شوقم در خروش آورده است
باز ہوے ہیچو مستان میزنم

گرچه دل باہج کس در بند نیست
جوش خون با این و با آن میزنم

بند ہر خواہش ز دل می بگسلم
نقش ہر صورت بعنوان میزنم

گر حدیث از کسب دوکان می کنم
ور نشید از باغ و بستان میزنم

تیشہ در بگاہ آذر می نهم
لالہ بر دستار نعماں میزنم

دعوی ہستی همان بت گiest
کافر مگر لاف ایماں میزنم

در رہ از رہزن خطر ہاگفتہ اند
گام در بیراہ آساں میزنم

راز دان خوے دہرم کردہ اند
خندہ بر داناو ناداں میزنم



I strike the string of my soul with the plectrum,
who knows what descant I shall produce?

Old passions are again in commotion within me,
again a howl I raise like a lunatic.

Though my heart is bonded to nobody,
the blood therein surges up for this or that.

I fetter and rip every desire in my heart,
and wipe out every image and its caption.

Though I talk of the gains of business,
I sing the songs of orchards and gardens.

I keep my chisel in Aazar's¹ tent,
and fix a tulip in the turban of Nu'man.²

I assert my existence in worshipping idols,
I shall be an infidel if I brag of my faith.

They say in the highway there are hazards of pirates,
so I choose to ambulate directionless easy paths.

I know the secrets of the ways of the world,
I, therefore, laugh at the wise and the unwise alike.

1. Name of Prophet Abraham's father, famous for his idol-making
2. A renowned theologian

سوخت جگر تا کجارج چمیدن دهم
رنگ شوای خون گرم تابه پریدن دهم

جلوه غلط کرده اند رخ بخشا تاز مهر
ذره و پروانه رامزده دیدن دهم

سبزه مادر عدم تشنه برق بلاست
در ره سیل بهار شرح دمیدن دهم

بر اثر کوهکن ناله فرستاده ایم
تا جگر سنگ را ذوق دریدن دهم

شیوه تسلیم مایوده تواضع طلب
در خم محراب تیغ تن خمیدن دهم

خیز که راز درون در جگر نی دیم
ناله خود را از خویش داد شنیدن دهم

ناله تا گم بخت راه لب از ظلمت غم
جان چراغیست که راهگذر داشته ایم

جا گرفتن بدل دوست نه اندازه ماست
تو همان گیر که آیم و اثر داشته ایم

وارسیدیم که غالب بمیان بود نقاب
کاش دانیم که از روی که برداشته ایم



The liver so charred can no more be given the trouble of dribbling,
O my sizzling blood, be colour so that we can sublimate you.

They are having a delusion, reveal your face in mercy,
we shall give the particle and the moth the delight of a real vision.

Our verdure in this world starves for calamitous lightning,
in the ways of the spate of spring we shall give a description of
sprouting.

Following the foot-prints of Kohkan¹ we send out our call,
so that in the heart of the stone we produce the desire to unshut itself.

The practice of our submission sought hospitality,
under the bending arch of the sword we surrendered our body!.

Rise up, O secret of the inmost, so that we breathe you into the liver,
so that we hear our own lays and delight in them.

To restrain the sigh in the gloom of distress from reaching the lips,
my soul is a lamp I have kept lit at the roadside.

Occupying a niche in Love's heart is not our craft,
you just observe that we are poignant sighs charged with effect.

We were informed that Ghalib was a curtain coming between,
if only we had known what we were taking away from the face!

1. Farhad, the legendary lover, who cut through mountains to win his beloved, Shirin.

○
رقم که کهنگی ز تماشا برا فگنم
در بزم رنگ و بو نمطی دیگر افگنم

دروجد اهل صومعه ذوق نظاره نیست
تا هید را بز مزه از منظر افگنم

معشوقه راز ناله بدال سان کنم حزین
کز لاغری ز ساعد او زیور افگنم

هنگامه را چیم جنون بر جگر زخم
اندیشه را هوای فسون در سرا فگنم

خلم که هم بجای رطب طوطی آورم
ا برم که هم بروی زمین گوهر افگنم

باغزیاں ز شرح غم کار زار نفس
شمشیر را بر عشه ز تن جوهر افگنم

ضعفم بجعبه مرتبه قرب خاص داد
سجاده گستری تو و من بستر افگنم

تاباده تلخ تر شود و سینه ریش تر
بگدازم آبگینه و در ساغر افگنم

غالب بطرح منقبت عاشقانه
رقم که کهنگی ز تماشا برا فگنم



I arise to annihilate the outworn from the spectacle,
and establish a new order in the rendezvous of hues and odours.

The sages have no desire for a vision in their ecstasy,
with the force of my descant I shall bring Venus down.

My incessant, poignant songs shall make my Love shrivel,
and all her rings and ornaments will slip down her frame.

I shall add commotion to the heart of Frenzy,
and mingle winds of fantasy with the brain of Reason.

I am a tree that bears no fruit but warbling birds,
I am a cloud that strews no rain but pearls.

The heroes of the past shall listen to the tale of my war with my inmost;
they shall lose their valour as does a sword its lustre.

My weakness has won me a position special in the Ka'ba,
where the worshippers lay their prayer-mats, there I lay my mattress.

In order to make the vintage more acrid and caustic,
I crush the glass of the flask and lace my cup with it.

In the unique strain of a lover's encomium, I Ghalib,
arise to annihilate the outworn from the spectacle.



تاز دیوانم که سرمست سخن خواهد شدن
این می از قحط خریداری کهن خواهد شدن

کو کجاست را در عدم اوج قبولی بوده است
شهرت شعرم به گیتی بعد من خواهد شدن

حرف حرفم در مذاق فتنه جا خواهد گرفت
دستگاه ناز شیخ و برهمین خواهد شدن

هے چه میگویم اگر اینست وضع روزگار
دفتر اشعار باب سوختن خواهد شدن

آنکه صور ناله از شور نفس موزون دمید
کاش دیدی کاین نشید شوق فن خواهد شدن

کاش سنجیدی که بهر قتل معنی یک قلم
جلوه کلک و رقم دارور سن خواهد شدن

چشم کور آینه دعوی بهف خواهد گرفت
دست شل مشاط زلف سخن خواهد شدن

شاهد مضمون که اینک شهری جان و دلست
روستا آواره کام و دهن خواهد شدن

شاد باش ای دل دریس محفل که هر جانغمه ایست
شیون رنج فراق جان و تن خواهد شدن



Untill people get inebriated by the sparkling verse of mine,
this wine shall become antiquated for the lack of customers.

In eternity my star was at the zenith of admiration,
in this world, my poetry will be famous when I shall be no more.

Every word of mine, in idle trifle, shall create a discord
and thus acquire the authority of the men of clergy.

Oh, what do I say! If this were the way of livelihood,
let all offices of poetry be consigned to fire.

It is the cry of a pang that rises from the commotion of soul,
O could you see in it my desire for achieving art.

O listen, for the killing ideas, by one stroke,
works of pen and page shall be your gibbet and noose.

The blind shall be holding in their hands the mirror of claim,
crippled hands shall be adorning the curls of poetry.

The beloved in my poetry who dwells in my heart and soul,
shall be a roadster wench mooching for lust and bread.

Be happy, O my heart, for yet in this assembly there is melody,
the lamentations of sorrow for separation are becoming body and soul.

هم فروغ شمع هستی تیرگی خواهد گزید
هم بساط بزم مستی پر شکن خواهد شدن

از تب و تاب فنا یکباره چون مشتی سپند
هر یکی گرم و واع خویشتن خواهد شدن

حسن را از جلوه نازش نفس خواهد گداخت
نغمه را از پرده سازش کفن خواهد شدن

دهر بی پروا عیار شیوه با خواهد گرفت
داوری خون در نهاد ما و من خواهد شدن

پرده با از روی کار همدگر خواهد فتاد
خلوت گبر و مسلمان انجمن خواهد شدن

در ته هر حرف غالب چیده ام میخانه
تاز دیوانم که سر مست سخن خواهد شدن

The light of life's lamp will be doomed by gloom,
the carpet of the pleasure-house will be full of folds.

Like a handful of rue seeds, in the fervor of self-destruction,
every one shall be hot with the wish for parting from oneself.

Beauty shall melt by the appearance of glory of self,
poetry shall make a shroud for itself from the veil of music.

The world shall make indifference its criterion of its manner
and quarrelsome blood will be in the nature of yours and mine.

From the face of working together all veils shall fall,
the privacy of every believer shall turn into a crowd.

In the depth of every word, (Ghalib) I seeks a tavern,
so that people get inebriated by the verse of my divan.

چوں ز بانها لال و جانها پر ز غوغا کرده
بایدت از خویش پرسید آنچه باما کرده

گر نه مشتاق عرض دستگاه حسن خویش
جاں فدایت دیده را بهر چه بینا کرده

هفت دوزخ در نهاد شر مساری مضمراست
انتقامست اینکه با مجرم مدارا کرده

صد کشاد آنرا که هم امروز رخ بنموده
مژده باد آنرا که محذوق فردا کرده

خسنگان را دل پر ششهای پنهان برده
باد رستاں گر نوازش های پیدا کرده

ذره را روشناس صد بیابان گفته
قطره را آشنای هفت دریا کرده

دجله میجو شد همانا دیده ما جوای تست
شعله میبالد مگر در سینه ها جا کرده

جلوه و نظاره پنداری که از یک گوهر ست
خویش را در پرده خلق تماشا کرده

دیده میگرید زباں مینالد و دل می تپد
عقد ها از کار غالب سر بسر وا کرده

When You gave us riches and filled our souls with commotion
with Your own hands, You asked, 'What have you done to me?'

When not anxious to see the strength of Your beauty expressed
You devote Yourself to the eyes of every one who sees.

Seven infernos lie there in the nature of repentance,
it is the true punishment meted out to a criminal.

A hundred avenues are open to one to whom You reveal your face,
the one You keep in tomorrow's hope has the real bliss.

The despondent are further tormented by Your inquest,
the well-to-do are always favoured by Your kindness.

You ordained the particle to have knowledge of a hundred deserts,
upon a droplet You bestowed knowledge of seven rivers.

A Tigris bursts forth from the eyes longing to see You,
A blaze flares up in the bosom wherein You reside.

Appearance and immanence are aspects of the same jewel,
in the veneer of others You enjoy Your own spectacle.

His eyes weep, his tongue repines and his heart blares,
in one Ghalib You have revealed all Your secrets.



تاہم ز دل برد کافر ادائے
بالا بلندے کوتہ قبائے

از خوے ناخوش دوزخ نہیے
وز روے دلکش سینولقائے

زر دشت کیشی آتش پرستے
بر سم گذارے زمزم سرائے

چون مرگ ناگہ بسیار تلخی
چون جان شیرین اندک وفائے

در کام بخشی ممسک امیرے
در دلتانی مبرم گدائے

گستاخ سازے پوزش پسندے
طاقت گدازے صبر آزمائے

در کینہ ورزی تفسیدہ دشتے
در مہربانی بستان سرائے

از زلف پر خم مشکین نقابے
از تابش تن زرین ادائے

در عرض دعوی لیلی نکوہی
بر زغم غالب مجنون ستائے

My heart is bereft of all patience by her gentle ways,
she keeps her majestic height attired in short raiment.

By her unpleasant demeanour she is an inferno,
but by her beautiful face she is a paradise.

A Zoroastrian by faith she is a fire-worshipper,
bearing a cane in her hand and crooning sacred hymns.

Like a sudden death, she is full of gall,
like sweet life, she is of little hope.

In showing favour, she is niggardly rich,
in heart-stealing, she is a persistent beggar.

She makes you insolent then likes your apologies,
She robs you of your strength and tries your patience.

In vengeance she is a burning desert,
in kindness she is a palace-garden.

Because of her curls she wears a fragrant veil,
by the radiance of her body she has the shine of gold.

In her self-esteem she talks of Laila,
in tormenting Ghalib she admires Majnun.

ولم در ناله از پہلوئے داغ سینہ تابستے
بر آ تشپارہٴ حسپیدہ لختی از کبابستے

ہجوم جلوۂ گل کاروانم را غبار سے
طلوع نشائی مشرقم را آفتاب سے

فغانم را نوائے صور محشر ہمعنان سے
بیانم را رواج شور طوفان در رکاب سے

ز خاکم نالہ میر وید ز داغ شعلہ میبالد
رسیدی گرد راہ سے و دیدی اضطراب سے

خطائی سر زد از بصری و شر منده از نازم
مخسرت مردن استغنائی قاتل را جواب سے

دلم صبح شب وصل تو بر گاشانہ می لرزد
درو باہم بوجد از ذوق بوی رخت خواب سے

زہے جان و ولم کز ہفت دوزخ یاد گارستی
خوشا پاتا سرت کز ہشت گلشن انتخاب سے

گلویم تشنہ و جان و ولم افسردہ ہی ساقی
بدہ نوشینہ دارائی کہ ہم آتش ہم آہ سے

منال از عمر و ساز عیش کن کز باد نوروزے
بہ گلشن جلوۂ رنگینے عہد شباب سے

○

In crying, my heart near my bosom is so hot
as if a piece of meat is being roasted to make a kabob.

The spectacle of a myriad of flowers is but the dust of the caravan,
the beginning of inebriation is the rising of the sun in the east.

My lament is in consonance with the commotion of the day of
judgement,
my verse rides side by side with the tumult of a tempest.

From my dust rises a painful cry and flame from my heart-sore,
dust thus gets its life and vision its restlessness.

In impatience my love erred and is humbled seeing my delight,
dying in despondence is the answer to the pride of a slayer.

My heart remains hovering over the parlour on the morning of the night
of union,
all doors and windows dream of the fragrance of her attire.

My heart and soul are remeniscent of the seven infernoes,
hail! I had opted for the six gardens in entirety.

My throat is thirsty and my soul and heart are lifeless, O, Saqi,
give me such a cup of vintage that contains fire dissolved in water.

Take advantage of your life and seek delight in spring-soaking,
for the resplendence of garden's spectacle is nothing but your youth.

دیدہ و رآنکہ تانہد دل بہ شمار دلبری
در دل سنگ بنگرد رقص بتان آذری

تانہود بہ لطف و قہر ہیچ بہانہ در میان
شکر گرفت نارسا شکوہ شمر دسر سری

اے تو کہ ہیچ ذرہ را جز برہ توروئے نیست
در طلبت توان گرفت بادیہ را بہ رہبری

ہر کہ دست در برش داغ تور ویدش زد دل
تا چو بدیگرے دہد باز بری بہ داوری

بسکہ بہ فن عاشقی غیرت غیر جان گذاشت
باتو خوشم کہ جز تو نیست روئے بہر کہ آوری

ر شک ملک چہ و چرا چون ہو رہ نمی برد
بیہدہ در ہوائے تومی پرد از سبک سری

حیف کہ من بخون تیموز تو سخن رود کہ تو
اشک بدیدہ بشمری نالہ بہ سینہ بنگری

کوثر اگر بمن رسد خاک خورم زبے نمی
طوئی اگر ز من شود ہمہ کشم زبے بری

درد ترا بوقت جنگ قاعدہ تسمتشی
فکر مرا بزیر زنگ آئینہ سکندری



A visionary is one who applies his heart that it be captivated,
in the heart of a stone beholds the dances of Azar's icons.

In order that there is no excuse between mercy and wrath,
he paid no attention to my thanks and gave little heed to my complaints.

O You, there is no such grain as has not its face turned to you,
thus in the quest for You, one may take a desert as one's guide.

Everyone who bears Your blister travels away from his heart,
so that he gives to somebody else the bezoar stone for judgement.

Since in the art of love there is no valour left for the rivals to show,
I am happy with You that there is no one but You, whichever way You
turn Your face.

Why should I envy the angels who do not find their way to you?
vainly they flutter about in utter fatuousness in your air.

Alas that I burn in my own blood while it is said that You count
every drop of tear shed from an eye and hear every sigh that arises from
a bosom.

The water of Kausar,¹ if given to me, shall be dust for being
moistureless.

If Tuba² belongs to me, I shall use it as fuel for being fruitless.

Crooning your name during a combat is the ritual of warriors,
my own thought, because of its rust, is Alexander's mirror to me.

1. A stream in Paradise.

2. Name of a tree in Paradise.

چراغ ویر

نفس با صور دمساز است امروز
خموشی محشر راز است امروز

رگ سنگم شرارے می نویسم
کف خاکم غبارے می نویسم

دل از شور شکایتها بجوش است
حباب بے نوا طوفاں خروش است

تعالی اللہ بنارس چشم بد دور
بہشت خرم و فردوس معمور

تناخ مشرباں چوں لب کشایند
بہ کیش خویش کاشی راستایند

کہ ہر کس کا ندارن گلشن بمیرد
دگر پیوند جسمانی نگیرد



Temple Lamp

In unison with the trumpet is my breath today,
and my silence is resurrection of secrets.

The vein of stone I am, writing flashes,
a handful of clay I am writing of dust-storms.

My heart is effusive with the tumult of pain,
a bubble without a companion stirring tempest.

Praise to God! Be Banarase saved from an evil eye,
it is the blissful Elysium, a delightful garden.

Good people of future shall open their lips,
with their own faith shall they glorify the city of Kashi.

Whosoever breathes his last in this garden,
has not to bear the travails of transmigration.

چمن سرمایہ امید گردو
ہمر دن زندہ جاوید گردو

زہی آسودگی بخش روانہا
کہ داغ جسم می شوید ز جانہا

شگفتی نیست از آب و ہواش
کہ تنها جان شود اندر فضایش

بیا ای غافل از کیفیت ناز
نگاہی بر پری زادانش انداز

ہمہ جانہائے بے تن کن تماشا
ندارد آب و خاک این جلوہ تماشا

نہادشان چوبوی گل گراں نیست
ہمہ جانند جسمی در میاں نیست

خس و خارش گلستانست گوئی
غبارش جوہر جان است گوئی

سوادش پائے تخت بت پرستان
سراپایش زیارت گاہ مستان

عبادت خانہ ناقوسیان است
ہمانا کعبہ ہندوستان است

The garden they think is the apogee of hope,
when one dies here, they think, attains eternal life.

Wonderful! it provides solace to hearts,
washing away the blemish of body from souls.

Be not blossomed by the waters and air of this place,
for all bodies turn into pure spirits in its environs.

Come out of your blissful somnambulence,
and cast a glance at the elfin-born.

They are all souls without bodies, keep watching
for this spectacle is devoid of clay and water.

Essence of grace, like rose-fragrance, have no weight,
they are pure spirits, uncontaminated by bodies.

Its weeds and thorns, make a garden, you shall say,
its very dust is the essence of life, you shall say.

The large city is the city of idolaters,
every inch is a place of pilgrimage for the intoxicated.

It is the place of worship for the music-lovers,
surely it is the Mecca of Hindustan.

بتانش را ہیولی شعلہ طور
سراپا نور ایزد چشم بد دور

میانها نازک و دلہا توانا
زنادانی بکار خویش دانا

تبسم بسکہ در لبہا طبیعیت
دہنہا رشک گلہائے ربیعیت

ادائے یک گلستان جلوہ سرشار
خرامے صد قیامت فتنہ دربار

بہ لطف از موج گوہر نرم رو تر
بناز از خون عاشق گرم رو تر

زاگیر قد انداز خرامے
ہپائے گلبنے گستردہ دامے

ز رنگین جلوہ ہا غار تگر ہوش
بہار بستر و نو روز آغوش

ز تاب جلوہ خویش آتش افروز
بتان بت پرست و برہمن سوز

بہ سامان دو عالم گلستان رنگ
ز تاب رخ چراغان لب گنگ

The bodies of women have the substance of the flash of Sinai,
through and through a divine light, be it saved from an evil eye!

Their bodies are feeble but their hearts are firm,
through their innocence they are wisely self-seeking.

Smiles playing on their lips are their nature,
their mouths vie the flowers of spring.

Their charms: a garden brimming with glory,
their place: a hundred doomsdays conspiring.

In their sweetness, more sober-looking than a wave of pearls,
in their grace, hotter than the blood of lovers.

In their lofty stature and the ways of traipse
a snare spread out under the shade of a rose-bush.

For their garish flashes they are plunderers of your wits,
they are budtime of your beds and spring of your embraces.

By the heat of their own flashes they kindle fires,
they are idols of the idolators burning their priests.

By the bounty of their charms they are gardens of the two worlds,
in the brightness of their faces, they are illumination along the Ganges.

قیامت قامتان مرگان درازان
ز مرگان بر صف دل نیزه باران

به تن سرمایه افزایش دل
سراپا مژده آسایش دل

به مستی موج را فرموده آرام
ز نغزی آب را بخشیده اندام

ز بس عرض تمنای کند گنگ
ز موج آغوش هاوای کند گنگ

ز تاب جلوه ها بیتاب گشته
گر ها در صدف ها آب گشته

They have long eyelashes and resurrect the dead,
they pierce hearts with the lances of their eyelashes.

Their bodies are a wealth that rejuvenate the hearts,
each cap-a-pie a good tiding of solace to the heart.

By their inebriating beauty they declare rest for the waves,
through their elegance they teach movement to waters.

The waters of the Ganges supplicate their desire,
the waves of the Ganges spread out their arms to embrace.

By the heat of their flashes, the river, becomes restive,
that the pearls in the oysters change into water.

معنی نامہ

معنی دگر زخمہ بر تار زن
گل از نغمہ تر بدستار زن

بہ پردازش آن گل افشاں نواے
نگویم غم از دل دل از من رباے

دل از خویش بردار و بر ساز نہ
ہم از خویش گوشی بر آواز نہ

ز گنجینہ ساز بردار بند
درین پردہ نقشے بہجار بند

برامش بزاور ہم آواز شو
بہ آہنگ دالش نوا ساز شو

کہ دامن ز دستانسرائی چنین
دلاویر باشد نوائی چنین

To the Musician

O musician, strike the string with plectrum of a different sort
and adorn my turban with a flower of a fresh melody.

With the flight of that flower-strewing descant, I shall tell out
my heart from my self, if not sorrow from my heart.

Take away my heart and broadcast it from the lyre,
and what you listen from yourself, convey that through music.

Unchain the treasure of music and set it free
and in that veil find out the unbeaten path.

Be in consonance with the music of Venus,
produce songs from the symphony of intellect.

For I know that from a chanticleer's lips,
Such a chant is always heart-alluring.

ز کام و زبان هر سه جان را درود

ز جان جاودانی رواں را درود

گهر جوئے را مژده کز تیره خاک

در خشد همی گوهر تا بناک

دمی کاندرا آئین زمن میرود

تو دانی سخن در سخن میرود

سخن گرچه گنجینه گوهر ست

خرد را ولے تابشی دیگر ست

همانا بشبهای چوں پر زاغ

نه بینی گهر جبر و روشن چراغ

به پیرایش این کهن کار گاه

بدانش تو اں داشت آئین نگاه

بود بستگی راکشاد از خرد

سر مرد خالی مباد از خرد

خرد چشمه زندگانی بود

خرد را به پیری جوانی بود

فروغ سحرگاه روحانیان

چراغ شبستان یونانیان

With your throat and tongue pray for all the forms of life,
from your inmost pray for the continuity of life.

Take to the pearl-seekers the news from this dark clay,
that it too shimmers like a brilliant gem.

The moment the constitution of the inmost flows forth,
you know, a song flows out from every other song.

Although poetry is a treasure of jewels,
intellect has a brilliance of its own kind.

You know that during night, as dark as a crow's wing,
you cannot find out a pearl without the light of a lamp.

For the beautification of this aged and wearied world,
you need reason if you have eyes for beauty.

Open all the chains of reason in captivity,
I wish man's head were not empty of reason.

Reason is the inexhaustible fount of life,
reason gets its youth with advancing age.

Reason is the dawn of all those who live,
reason was the lamp of night to the Greeks.

نخستین نمودار هستی گراے
خرد بود کاند سیاہی زداے

به پیا نهای نظر نور پاک
نمودند قسمت براجزای خاک

زهر ذره کان آفتابی شود
نگه سر خوش کامیابی شود

که بینی بتاریکے روز من
فروزان سواد دل افروز من

کف خاک من زان ضیا گستر است
که چون ریگ رخشان بانجم گریست

کسی کو دم از روشنائی زند
نخود فال وانش ستائی زند

درین پرده خود راستا کش گریست
که دانند مردم که دانشور ست

خرد جویم از خود بود مرگ من
به هستی خرد بس بود برگ من

سخن گرچه پیغام راز آورد
سرود از چه در ابتهزاز آورد

Reason appeared first before anything inclined to be,
reason it was that removed darkness from the foundation.

With the measure of His eyes, the sacred Light
appeared in the elements according to their destiny.

Let every particle shine as shines the sun,
and every eye overflow with joy of success.

You see me as a day of darkness, yet
my heart's core is still brilliant with light.

This handful of dust shines because of the source of light
as sand of the desert shines with luminous stars.

Anyone who shows all this luminosity,
in essence praises the greatness of reason.

If one knows this truth behind his self's veil,
is known by people as a man of intellect.

I seek knowledge even if it were my death,
in life knowledge is wealth and strength.

Even if poetry brings us the message of life;
even if music takes us into abandon.

خرد انداین گوهرین در کشاد
ز مغز خن گنج گوهر کشاد

خرد داند آن پرده بر ساز بست
برامش طلسم ز آواز بست

بدانش توای پاس دم داشتن
شمار خرام قلم داشتن

ازین باده هر کس که سرمست تر
با فشاندن گنج تر دست تر

به مستی خرد رهنمای خودست
رودگر ز خود هم بجای خودست

چو ساقی ره خود نمائی گرفت
به مستی خرد زور دائی گرفت

سیه مست تر هر که هشیار تر
بسکدوش تر چون گرانبار تر

جگرگون نوائی که نامش دلست
ز نه جرعه خواران این مخلصست

نشیدی که مستان این می کشند
صریر از قلم ناله ازنی کشند

Knowledge knows how to open the door of a pearl
and reveals the treasure in the kernel of poetry.

Knowledge removes veil from the choked music,
and creates magic out of the withheld sound.

Knowledge alone helps you have your life
and then evaluate these movements of pen.

One who is inebriated with this vintage,
doles out the prize generously to others.

In its ecstasy, reason is its own guide,
even if it strays, it is at its place.

When Saqi chose the path of self-revelation
in its rapture it gained his speed.

One boozed with reason is the one more awake,
one tightly laden with reason is the one more wealthy.

A song that emerges from soul is named the heart,
those who drink to dregs keep each other company.

If you sit in the company of such drinkers,
the pen will produce a music as does a flute.

سرودی سخن روشناس همست
که هر یک ز وابستگان دمست

ز هی کیمیاے معانی سخن
نخود زنده جاودانی سخن

سخن را از ان دوست دارم که دوست
به تصدیق از ما طلبگار اوست

سخن گرچه خود گوهرین افرست
سخن در سخن لعل با گوهرست

سخن باده اندیشه مینای او
زبان بی سخن لای پالای او

به پیمودن باده پیما نه گوش
خود ساقی و خود خرد جرعه نوش

حریفان درین بزم همواره مست
بیوئی ز می جمله یکباره مست

پلنگینه پوشان درین انجمن
چو گردون بر قص اندرون چرخ زن

خرد کرده در خود ظهوری دگر
دل از دیده پز رفته نوری دگر

The delight of poetry is known to all,
for every one in this world is endowed with life.

Wonderful is the panacea of the meaning of verse,
for poetry has itself an eternal life.

In poetry I find such a friend of mine
as seeks authentication from my inmost.

Poetry, even if is the connoisseur of jems,
is in itself a combination of jems and jewels.

Poetry is a wine while reason is the effect,
a speechless tongue is the sediment, poetry the essence.

For the assessment of this liquor your ears are the measure,
knowledge is the cup-bearer and its own guzzler.

All the entrants in this company are equally boozed,
like fragrance they remain transported together.

Those wearing royal vests in this coterie,
dance inwardly like a whirling wheel.

Knowledge always makes new revelations to itself
and the heart finds new light from the eyes of the past.

ز گنجی که بنیش بویرانه رستخت
در آفاق طرح پریخارنه رستخت

درین حلقه اوباش دیدار جوی
بدریوزه رنگ آورده روی

خرو کرده عنوان بنیش درست
رقم سنجی آفرینش درست

فروغ خرد قره ایزدیت
خدا ناشناس زنا بخره یست

نظر آشنا روی دانا یش
عمل روشناس توانا یش

ز اندیشه دم زد نظر نام یافت
بحر دار رفت از اثر کام یافت

چنان سطوتش راز بون خشم و آزر
که فرمان او برده گرگ و گراز

غضب را نشاط شجاعت دهد
ز خواهش به عصت قناعت دهد

باندازه زور آزمائی کند
خورو باده و پارسائی کند

With the treasure the discerning find in wilderness
a new style of elfinland is established in the world.

The ignorant in this circle look for their light
from the beggars bearing besmeared faces.

Reason sets right the title of understanding,
and guides in appreciating the works of learning.

Advancement of knowledge is the splendour of God,
no knowledge of God is because of one's empty-headedness.

Awareness is the face of all the learned,
action is the acquaintance of all the strong.

Through meditation the gnostic finds insights
through action an ambition has its effect.

Anger and lust are weak before the authority of reason
as if wolves and bores obey its orders.

Reason gives the delight of courage to wrath,
and teaches lust to have restraint and patience.

Reason tactfully remains engaged in strife,
while enjoying wines it remains abstinent.

بدین جنبش از مرگ بخشد نجات
بر اندیشه پیماید آب حیات

منشهای شائسته عادت شود
نظر کیمیای سعادت شود

زدانش پدید آید آئین داد
رسی چوں بدیں پایه نعم المعاد

جگر خون کن و از دل آزاد زی
بدین جاودانی رواں شاد زی

چنان دال که مردی بر اپسی سوار
بدشتی رخ آورده بهر شکار

جگر خواره یوزیست همراه او
جگر خوارے یوز دلخواه او

کندگر باندیشه رفتارها
نگهدار اندازه کارها

نگیرد سمنش ره تو سنے
بود رام یوزش بصید افکنے

چنین کس بدینگونه رخس و پلنگ
تواند کو صیدی در آورد بجنگ

Reason redeems us from the dread of death
through thought it offers us the water of life.

All desires acquire the habit of decency,
and eyes become the elixir of bliss.

Through knowledge He manifested Himself gave us laws
that we too attained the status of a benefactor.

Dissolve your liver in blood to give vent to life,
and thus through immortality keep life going.

You know, once a man riding his horse
set out to the wilderness for hunting.

He was accompanied by a magical hound of his,
the magic of the hound made it dear to him.

If, through conjecture he increased his speed,
he kept in view the method of his job.

His horse did not run like a young nimble steed,
for it was obedient to the hound in chase.

Thus anyone who acts like a steed and a hound,
is sure to take a prey into his grip.

وگر دشت پیا هنر پیشه نیست
شناسای فرجام اندیشه نیست

بدانش غم آموز گار منست
خزان غریباں بهار منست

غمی کز ازل در سرشت منست
بود دوزخ اما بهشت منست

بهنگامه نیرنگ ساز آمدن
ز خود رفتن و زور باز آمدن

من از خویشتن بادل درد مند
نوای غزل بر کشیده بلند

به تنهائی از همدان خودم
بدل مردگی نوحه خوان خودم

کسم در سخن کار فرمای نیست
به بخشندگی همت افزای نیست

شب از تیرگی اهر من روی بود
ز سود اجهان اهر من خوی بود

نجلوت ز تا ریکم دم گرفت
نشاط سخن صورت غم گرفت

Otherwise no art or job is expanse-measuring
mere acquaintance with technique is not imagination.

Because of consciousness pain is my teacher,
the autumn of the unwitty is my spring.

Pain is ingrained in my nature from the very beginning,
an inferno it is, but is a paradise to me.

From turmoil comes the magic of music,
when moved away from itself it soon comes back.

I, from my own self, with an afflicted heart,
bring out a loud strain of poetry.

In solitude I am one of my own company,
with a wearied heart I lament my own self.

Worldly cares have no authority over my poetry,
for freedom there is no encouragement from others.

The night looked fiendish because of its gloom
because of commerce the world was Ahriman faced.

In my withdrawl I arrested the breath of darkness,
in the form of pain I received the pleasure of poetry.

دران گنج تارو شب هولناک
چراغی طلب کردم از جان پاک

چراغی که باشد ز پروانه دور
چراغی که باد از هر خانه دور

نه بینی نشانی ز روغن درو
کند شعله بر خولیش شیون درو

چراغی که بی راغن فرو ختم
ولی بود کز تاب غم سو ختم

ز یزدان غم آمد دل افروز من
چراغ شب و اختر روز من

نشاید که من شکوه بنجم ز غم
خرد رنج از من چو رنجم ز غم

غم دل ز من مرحبا جوی باد
دلم زار و لب مرحبا گوی باد

دلم همچو غالب بغم شاد باد
بدین گنج ویرانه آباد باد

In that closet, darkness of the dreadful night,
I purged out by seeking a lamp in my soul.

A lamp that is away from the fluttering moth,
a lamp that is away from every house.

You cannot see even a trace of oil in it,
its flame laments on itself in it.

A lamp that I lit without any oil,
is close to me that I am consumed by its heat.

Pain comes from God to illuminate my heart,
it is the lamp of my night and the star of my day.

It is not in order to complain of pain,
reason will complain of me, if I complain of pain.

O my pain! you shall always enjoy my blessing,
my lips will hail you, my heart may ache.

May my heart (like Ghalib) be happy with pain,
and this treasure of the desert be always replete

قصیده

رهروان چون گهر آبله پابیند
پای را پایه فراتر ز ثریا بیند

هر چه در دیده عیانست نگاهش دارند
هر چه در سینه نهانست ز سیمابیند

راستی از رقم صفحه هستی خوانند
نقش کج بر ورق شهر عشقا بیند

دور بینان ازل کوری چشم بد بین
هم درینجا نگر ندانچه در اینجا بیند

راه زین دیده و ران پرس که در گرم روی
جاده چوں نبض تپان در تن صحرابیند

شرری را که نباگاه بدر خواهد جست
زخمه کر دار بتا رگ خارا بیند

An Encomium

When travellers see the pearls of boils on their feet,
they think their feet are going beyond the heights of Pleiades.

Whatever lies revealed in eyes, they keep in view,
whatever lies concealed in bosom, they read that from foreheads.

They read the right from the page of life,
and know tedious arrays on the wings of the phoenix.

O men with a vision of eternity, see the blindness of the cynics,
what they do not find in this world, they envision in that world.

Ask the men of vision about this path, that in their fervent speed,
they see the highway as a feverish vein running across a desert.

In a flame that unexpectedly rises out of doors
they think a plectrum has struck a string in a stone.

قطره را که هر آینه لهر خواهد بست

صورت آبله بر چهره دریا بیند

شام در کوکبه صبح نمایاں نگرند

روز در منظر خفاش هویدا بیند

وحشت تفرقه در کاخ مصور بچند

مجمع انس به فی بست زلیخا بیند

نستوهند اگر همراه مجنون گردند

نخروشد اگر محمل لیلا بیند

خون خورند و جگر از غصه بدندان گیرند

خویش را چون بسر مانده تنها بیند

قطره آب بلب یوسه نشتر شمرند

یاره نان بگلو ریزه مینا بیند

قشقه را رونق هنگامه هند و خوانند

باده را شمع طربخانه تر سا بیند

بر سم و زمزمه و قشقه و زنا و صلیب

خرقه و سبج و مسواک و مصلا بیند

دل نه بندد به نیرنگ و درین دیر دورنگ

هر چه بیند بعنوان تماشا بیند

In every drop that turns into a shining pearl,
they see blisters on the face of the river.

They behold nightude in the brilliance of the morning star,
and see daytime manifest in the appearance of a bat.

They discern wilderness in a decorated palace,
and see entirety of love in Zulaikha's reed-veneer.

They will not demur if they are to wander along with Majnoon,
nor will they revel if they behold the camel-litter of Laila.

Guzzling their own blood they will angrily hold their liver in their teeth,
if they find themselves alone at the table with dainties numerous.

A drop of water is felt as if it were a lancet on their lives,
and a loaf of bread swallowed down the throat is seen as broken glass.

The forehead-dot of the Hindu is considered the hub of life,
and vintage is seen as the candle in church.

The wand, crooning, forehead-dot, sacred thread, and cross —
are seen as they see the cloak, rosary, denticle, and prayer-mat.

Not tethering their souls to the spectacle nor to the world of two-colours,
whatever they see, they see it as a passing show.

جام جویند وز رندی نگرایند بزهد
سکته انجم اگر درید بیضا بیند

هر چه در سونتوان یافت بهر سویا بند
هر چه در جانتوان دید بهر جا بیند

همه گر دندبدان پایه که اورا دانند
بیچ باشند دران وقت که خود را بیند

این نظرهای گرانمایه فراموش کنند
چون به نیرنگ سخن شعبده ما بیند

چشم بد دور بهادر شاه خرشید نگین
که لوایش بسر گنبد خضرا بیند

They seek their cup and, in their abandon, are not inclined to abstinence,
even if they behold a rosary of stars in the white-hand of Moses.

Whatever is unattainable in all directions, they attain it in every
direction;
all that is not visible anywhere is seen by them everywhere.

One at a high-rank is seen by them as the other,
one who is low is taken by them as their own self.

They ignore all these spectacles of splendour
when they look through the kaleidoscope of my poetry.

Let Bahadurshah, bright as the sun, be safe from the evil eye,
his standard is aflutter on the pinnacle of the dome of the sky.

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Prof. Shafi Shauq (b.1950) is a poet, critic and linguist and writes in Kashmiri and English. He is author of over twelve books of a wide variety and has edited several anthologies, text-books and journals.

After graduating in Science, he did his M.A., M.Phil and Ph.D. in English from the University of Kashmir and since 1978 has been teaching at the University.

"There is no denying of the fact that while reading Ghalib we are persistently conscious of the presence of the self of an individual, a non-conformist individual, but the question is whose self is it that gives us the feel of a presence? Is it the self of a person that has emerged out of the innumerable bio-notes dictated by innumerable school teachers to their pupils, and or is it the self of that person who is acquainted to us in the persona of Mr. Nasir-ud Din Shah of the wonderful TV serial? Is it the self of a bohemian character that is shaped in our minds by the continuous repetition of some of his popular romantic verses by the film actresses in their golden teens or the self of one who introduces himself in such surrealistic images as *main m'ārz - i misāl main dast - i - barīdah hūn* / I am an amputated arm in the assemblage of correspondences?"

Shafi Shauq

Front Cover : Ghalib's picture drawn before 1866 and referred to by Ghalib in his letters.

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